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# Calliope

1985



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# Calliope

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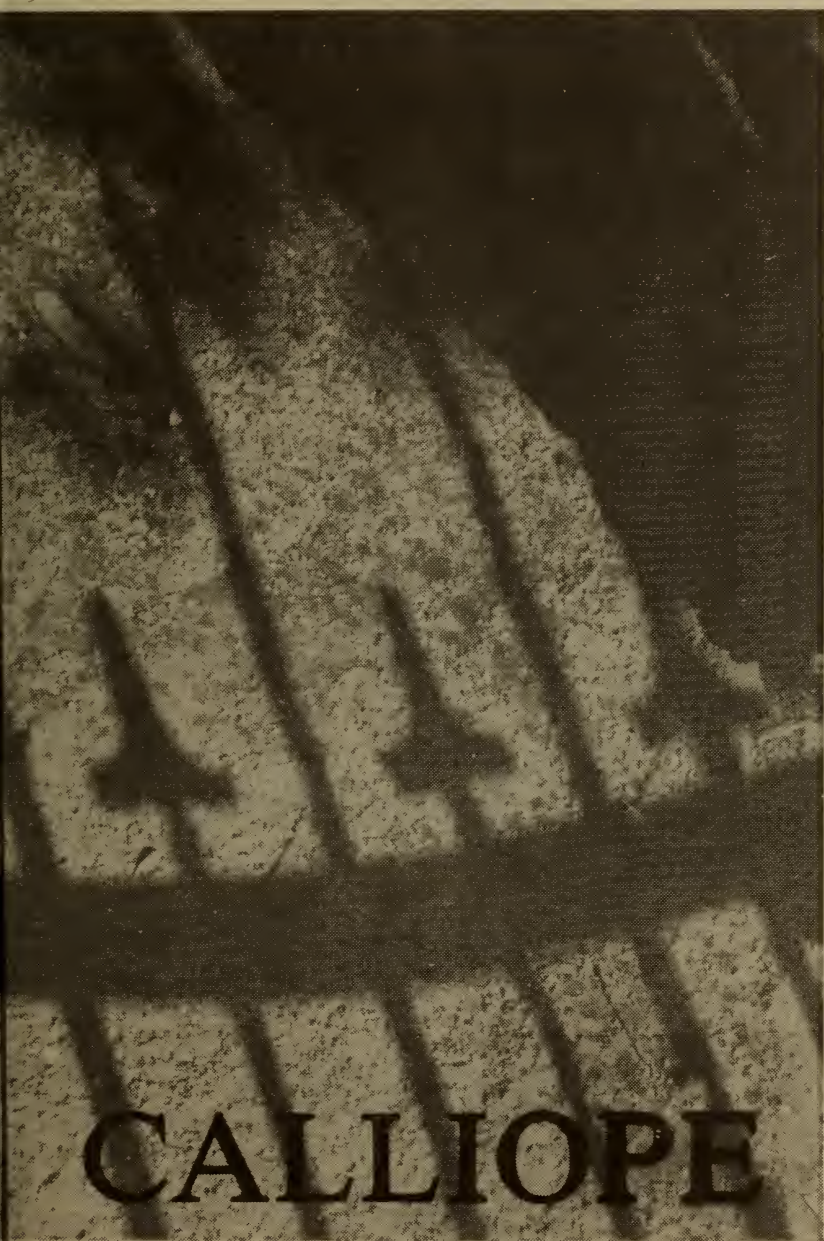
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Because of the precedents established by the 1984 edition of *Calliope*, we were challenged to produce an outstanding magazine, and the fine quality of writing and artwork submitted for consideration this year made the task a relatively easy one, the hardest part being deciding what had to be left out due to space limitations. We encourage all of the artists who supported this edition and all of the other students, faculty, and staff of Armstrong to help with future editions of *Calliope* as writers, artists, editors, advisors, and readers. The 1985 edition of *Calliope* has been a pleasure to put together and a great opportunity for gaining valuable experience in editing, layout, and management of time, space, and funds.

We gratefully acknowledge the generous contribution of the Lillian Spencer and Frank W. Spencer Foundation which made the award for the best submission to *Calliope* possible.

This edition of *Calliope* is dedicated to Dr. Hugh Pendexter, and Miss Lorraine Anchors for their continuing support of Armstrong State College, and to the alumni of Armstrong in recognition of the college's fiftieth anniversary celebration this year.

*Photo on previous pages by Liz Bailey*

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*Painting by Mary Alsten Johnson*

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## THE GREEN FUSE

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## OUT WEST, AT LAST

*He's callin' boy,  
don' wait 'roun'.  
That's the big boss foreman  
an' he's a standing there waiting.  
He wants you now babe.  
He's the headman wrangler  
and he's definitely put the word on down.  
So drop what you're doin',  
it's time to split.  
When the first cook is callin'  
it is no time to be late.  
The Chief Sitting Bull Custer Hating Redman  
wants u all there;  
for that last Little Big Horn,  
amongst spears and arrows,  
carbine bullets and stampeding horses.  
It is no time to wait.  
Git movin'! Don't W A I T.  
Everyone knows when his time's here  
and when yours comes,  
Man,  
Just race it to the death.*

L. Babits

# AN EXPLICATION OF "ARDOUR AND MEMORY"

*Shyla Nambiar*

Rosetti's sonnet, "Ardour and Memory," centers on a reconciliation of life and death. Both states are found to be inherent in each other and to form a cycle which recurs eternally. Though the natural phenomena described in the poem are marked by transitoriness, they acquire permanence by belonging to a process characterized by recurrence and continuity. In human beings, the passionate state and the mental faculty of memory reflect the theme of permanence in ephemerality and the close interconnection between life and death emphasized through the poem's lush imagery.

The choice of the Petrarchan form for this sonnet is appropriate because the form elicits, through its structure, a response analogous to some of the poem's themes. A Petrarchan sonnet is composed of an octave, a turn, and a sestet. The octave in this sonnet consists of an uninterrupted flow of images referring to sexuality and life, and the accumulation of these images builds a steady sense of pressure. The intensity is released at the turn as the speaker explains that the occurrences in the natural world cataloged are what "ardour loves, and memory" (line 9). An anti-climax then takes place in the sestet which allows the speaker to reach a philosophical resolution to the problem of life and loss. The progression from pressure to release and anti-climax intrinsic in the Petrarchan form is similar to the stages undergone during an emotional experience or a sexual encounter.

Certain devices that also render themes concrete are personification and the use of elongated vowels. Personifying natural elements reinforces the sense of life and motion stressed in the octave. The cuckoo-throb is called "the heart-beat of the Spring" (line 1), "summer clouds... visit every wing" (line 4), and streams of light are "furtive" and "flickering" (line 6). The majority of vowels in the sonnet are long and drawn-out, supporting through sound a slowness, sensuousness, and luxuriance that accord with the richness and fertility of Nature.

Sexuality and fertility, from which life is derived, are represented by color imagery, specifically references to red. The rosebud's blush (line 2), the fires of sunrise and sunset (line 5), and the flush of ruddiness (line 13) are all shades of red, and they connote passion, warmth, and sexuality, as does the reference to the "lusts" of the morning (line 7). Birth, life's beginning, is signified through Spring and the morning when light (another symbol of life) is "re-born" (line 6). The speaker sees Nature as a continuous cycle of birth, maturity, and death. The cuckoo-throb and the heartbeat are rhythmic sounds suggesting pattern. The seasons mentioned in the poem also represent a rhythm. The poem begins with spring, a time of renewal and the awakening of new life. It then proceeds to summer, a season of maturity, in line four. Though no season is mentioned in the sestet, the absence of the rose flower hints at autumn and the coming of winter. The ceaseless pattern present in seasonal and daily change is stressed through the



imagery of music. The cuckoo's throb (line 1), the birdsongs (line 8), and the ditties and dirges (line 14) reflect rhythm and pattern, which music is dependent on.

Though the imagery of the octave expresses life, ardor, and vitality, the death that is naturally concomitant with them is also suggested. As the rosebud matures into the full-grown flower that it must, it loses the blush of youth and vibrancy. The summer clouds that touch objects with the colors of the sunrise also touch them with those of sunset, implying that life and death are rooted in the same source. The interrelationship that exists between the two states is even found in the ambiguous use of the word "flickering." Flickering can mean a coming into being -- a flickering into life -- or an extinguishing of it -- the flickering out of life. Words and images pertaining to death prefigure the loss made explicit in the sestet, where that loss is expressed through references to flight. All joys are "flown" (line 9) and the wind "swoops onward brandishing the light" (line 9) through the forest boughs that are dark (a shade symbolic of death). However, though these images accentuate death, the speaker affirms life again by asserting that "Even yet the rose-tree's verdure left alone/ Will flush all ruddy though the rose be gone" (lines 13-14). These lines explain the idea of central importance in the poem and link two main threads running through it.

Underlying "Ardour and Memory" is a perception of life and death as being inextricably bound together. It appears in the physical world as a continuous rhythmic cycle in which living creatures undergo the cycle of birth and death. The process is circular and, as expressed in lines thirteen and fourteen, death leaves incipient life in its wake, by which the cycle will begin again. The seasons will recur. The sun will rise, pass through the sky, set, and rise again; the rosebud will bloom, die, and be reborn next spring. A larger state of immutability serves as a basis for transience and apparent change.

Ardor and memory are human states that counterpart nature's life cycle. Ardor is great intensity of emotion or desire, an immediate and vital experience destined to evanescence. However, the power of memory establishes permanence to the intense moment by means of the mind's ability to recollect past experiences. Though the moment is gone forever, it can be "re-lived" and the recollection functions as compensation. As the innate quality of an intense experience is transience, so the innate quality of memory is permanence. The speaker equates ardor with life, passion, and pleasure. Memory, though it takes a form of life through the power of recollection, is similar to death in that it requires distance from the immediate experience. Therefore, memory reconciles life and death.



## WHAT'S IN A CAP?

*I was thinking back to my high school days,  
And how nursing had entered my mind.  
I thought of the caps and the treatment trays,  
And the letters "R.N." I would sign.  
I thought of the uniforms white as could be,  
And the pin with the letters engraved.  
Yet, how could I know or how could I see,  
That Nursing's a road that you pave.  
It's not your name, it's not your looks,  
Or your voice or your hair or your eyes.  
It isn't just marks, it isn't just books,  
Or the early hour that you rise.  
It's the smile that a patient had when you're done,  
It's the "thank-you" that he gives you for his life.  
It's the cry of the newborn as he becomes one  
Of this great new world and its strife.  
It's the mother whose family awaits her return,  
Or the father who's too young to die.  
It's the big and the little things that you learn,  
It's the many times you ask "why?"  
It's not the cap but the head underneath,  
That makes the Nurse what she is.  
It's not the colored band or the high honored seat,  
It's the heart that goes with all this.*

Trusan Ponder

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## THE TENDER YEARS

*Trusan Ponder*

I can vividly remember those tender years of my early childhood: I was the youngest and least attractive of six siblings. My mother wasted no affection on me; rather, she showed me hardship and humiliation. Particularly, I recall my first day of elementary school; in fact, it shall remain etched in my mind for the duration of my life. I skipped hurriedly home with my bright red apple, which I had finger painted with water colors. Beaming with pride, unaware that I had streaks of red paint down the front of my dress, I handed the picture to my mother. Anticipating her delight, I was not prepared for what happened, for instead of joy, she shrieked as if in distress. "Why did you mess up that dress? You are so stupid!" she screamed. I wheeled and ran to my backyard treehouse, where I could still hear her hollering, "Come back here or I'll tan your hide good!" Needless to say, I stayed up there whimpering until way past dark; in the meantime, I'd missed supper and subsequently was sent to bed without it.



By the time I'd reached age sixteen my brothers and sisters had all left home. My mother dominated me; she told me what to do and what friends to see. Smirking, as she often did, she said, "One day you'll thank me for doing this."

At age nineteen I knew I had to leave home. Confronting her one day, I screamed through trembling lips, fighting back tears, "You don't love me and you never will. All those years when I was a little girl you never hugged me when I cried or patted me when I did something good. I can't live here anymore; I have to leave." At that moment, I could hear the pounding of my own heart. It took every ounce of gumption I ever possessed to utter those words to my mother, who stood there speechless. Suddenly she looked so lost and alone. With her hair tied back in a bun, I hadn't realized how grey it had gotten around the temples. I noticed the deep lines across her brow and the deep circles under her eyes, where a tear ran silently down her cheek; she didn't bother to brush it away. She had on the green "over the shoulder" apron I'd given her for Christmas four years ago; it was faded almost white now, and I noticed two small gravy stains on the left pocket. "I love you child," were her only words -- words I'd never heard her say before. She said nothing more, so I left the following day, and she didn't try to stop me.

The years passed quickly while I was away. I got married and had a family whom I lost in a tragic automobile accident. I returned to my mother's home only because I had nowhere else to go; surprisingly, she welcomed me with open arms. We embraced for a long time, tears flowing freely; at that moment, all the old feelings of bitterness and resentment vanished, and I loved her more than I'd ever realized I could. Suddenly she released me, fell to her knees while hugging my legs and lifted her eyes to the sky, face shining with tears, and muttered, "Thank you for sending my child back home to me. I'll never drive her away again." I helped her to her feet, which were bound up in orthopedic shoes. She was an old lady now, tired and work-worn; the years had taken their toll on her. She needed me now, and I vowed that I'd be there to take care of her through her tender years. I had to go through mine alone.

The tender years are the times in a person's life he is most vulnerable, the times when loved ones are needed the most and the times when having a strong shoulder to lean on is essential. These years are not only in childhood, but in adulthood as well. My tender years, when I was growing up, were most difficult; I felt so alone all the time. But with the care of a loving husband, even for so short a time, I was able to put my true feelings for my mother in perspective. I realized she did what she thought was right; she did the best she could, and that's all we have a right to ask of anyone. We now speak openly and freely about those years; she has regrets, but I don't have any hard feelings.



# BOYHOOD INTO SYMBOL: THE CHARACTERIZATION OF TOM SAWYER AND HUCKLEBERRY FINN

Beth Madison

Like Mark Twain himself, the function of the title characters in first *Tom Sawyer* and then later (and to a greater degree) in *Huckleberry Finn* is a study in paradox. The books share a subject -- the anatomy of boyhood -- and a deep dedication to the realistic and believable. In this, Twain is a more deeply hued and developed descendant of the "local color" brotherhood. However, the study of boyhood is shaded into a deeper current of symbolic duality which anticipates the moral dilemmas of adulthood. This duality is present within each book (in varying doses) and between the books, as well, and is founded upon and enhanced by that strict attention to the literal characteristic of Twain. Twain fairly trumpets the intense care given to this literal "backbone" to his message when he proclaims that he has painstakingly used no less than seven Mississippi River area dialects in *Huckleberry Finn*.<sup>1</sup> Such attention makes the symbolic dimension of Twain's characters even more striking in that they are real people and not pasteboard figures.

However, the character of and the extent to which this foundation realism leads into the symbolic are the basic points of difference between *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*. Both books are remarkable in their veracity as to the real life of "the boy" in the nineteenth century. Lionel Trilling declares that "one element in the greatness of *Huckleberry Finn*... and *Tom Sawyer* is that they succeed first as boy's books."<sup>2</sup> The freshness of the portrait is especially striking in comparison with contemporary counterparts such as the effete Little Lord Fauntleroy of Frances Hodgson Burnett and the stereotypical "Bad Boys" which were familiar figures in scolding Sunday School tracts and were further popularized by Thomas Bailey Aldrich's 1870 book (*The Story of a Bad Boy*).<sup>3</sup> Twain's boys are living, breathing creatures of the species. Yet, this realism does differ in its distance and point of view. Herein lies the crucial parting between *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*. In this parting, one finds the reason why symbolism is so pervasive in *Huckleberry Finn* and not in *Tom Sawyer*, although characters are defined and pushed in their respective directions in the earlier book.

However, Twain denied that even *Tom Sawyer* was intended as a boy's book. He tells his friend and editor, William Dean Howells, that "it is not a boy's book at all. It will only be read by adults. It is only written for adults."<sup>4</sup> This judgement proved wrong as the realism and humour proved a magnet for boys, and Howells convinced Twain to market the book towards the young audience. Yet, Twain's evaluation is correct in that *Tom Sawyer* is certainly adult in its point of view and distance. It is a third person re-telling of accurately remembered aspects of boyhood. T.S. Eliot comments that its viewpoint resembles "the adult observing the boy... Tom is... very much the boy that Mark Twain had been; he is remembered and described as he seemed to his elders, rather than created."<sup>5</sup> Twain himself

remarks in the preface to *Tom Sawyer* that "part of my plan has been to pleasantly remind adults of what they once were themselves" (Clemens, *Annotated Huckleberry Finn*, p. 25). Characteristically, the memories of the adult stifle the gloomy and allow the rosier and more idyllic facets of that remembered boyhood to flower. This position is possible because *Tom Sawyer* confines itself to a childhood world and deals only in a small part with adult issues (Clemens, *Annotated Huckleberry Finn*, p.29). Twain summarized the nostalgic aura which surrounds *Tom Sawyer*:

Schoolboy days are not happier than the days of after-life, but we look upon them regretfully because we have forgotten... all the sorrows and privations of that canonized epoch and remember only its orchard robberies, its wooden sword pageants and its fishing holidays.

In contrast, *Huckleberry Finn* takes up those aspects of boyhood which only too grimly and inexorably foreshadow the moral perplexities of the adult life. The novel is couched in the first person which conveys an immediacy and lack of romanticism which involves the reader as a character rather than as an observer. The personal expression available through first person provides an empathy and a sense of the boy's thoughts as he is thinking them rather than merely the structural framework of that boy's world as in *Tom Sawyer*. This particular quality is startlingly apparent when descriptions of sunrises from both *Huckleberry Finn* and *Tom Sawyer* are compared. *Tom Sawyer's* point of view induces a literary, imposed impression whilst *Huckleberry Finn* is the sunrise through the boy's own vernacular. For example, in *Tom Sawyer* "a grey squirrel and a big fellow of the fox kind came skurrying along sitting up at intervals to inspect and chatter at the boys." In *Huckleberry Finn*, a similar aspect of the sunrise scene is dealt with in this way: "a couple of squirrels sat on a limb and jabbered at me very friendly" (Blair, p. 74).

This plain, unadorned prose in *Huckleberry Finn* is a fitting accompaniment to its tone and harsher issues. Doc Robertson's murder and Injun Joe's horrible death through starvation are certainly evidence of ugly adult realities, but these events have the almost comforting quality of the melodrama in that Injun Joe is clearly all bad against good as represented by Tom and the society. There is none of the uneasy ambivalence of such characters as the Duke and the King or the "chivalrous" Grangerfords here. Tom's life is that of the black and white adventure and the mischievous rebellion against Aunt Polly's authority through pranks such as dosing the case with the hated painkiller. But, the rightness of the general standards is questioned neither by Tom nor Twain (Blair, p. 75). Despite his boyish unruliness, Tom is "wholly a social being" who has "an environment into which he fits" (Eliot, p. 329). The movement of *Tom Sawyer* carries from childish revolt to a "triumphant confirmation of Tom's membership in the cult of the respectable." Huck accepts these standards in *Tom Sawyer* though they make him uncomfortable and vows that he "will stick to the widdier till I rot," if he can then join Tom's gang. Still, Huck is a social outcast and, thus, is free from the bonds of convention that confine Tom. Huck "did not have to go to school or church, or



call any being master or obey anybody... he never had to wash or put on clean clothes"(Clemens, *Tom Sawyer*, p.62). Townsfolk comment that "Huck Finn ain't a name to open many doors, I judge!"(Clemens, *Tom Sawyer*, p.233). But, this societal censure gives Huck the freedom and potential to examine society, if innocently, in a manner that Tom never could with his hampering role in society and overweening imagination (Eliot, p.329).

In other words, in *Tom Sawyer* the potential for symbol is laid, but not developed. There is no need for it in the type of book that *Tom Sawyer* is. The use of Huck as the major character in Twain's "sequel" to *Tom Sawyer* is surely indicative of Twain's realization that Huck could tackle issues through his pragmatism and position outside society in a way denied to Tom, the very product of civilization. Twain says frankly that if he took Tom on into manhood "he would just lie like all the one-horse men in literature and the reader would develop a hearty contempt for him"(Clemens, *Letters*, p.86). Tom is clearly already possessed by the dreadful "Walter Scott disease"(Clemens, *Annotated Huckleberry Finn*, p.139) which had (according to Twain) taken hold of the nineteenth century imagination -- particularly that of the "Old South" variety. Huck, on the other hand, possesses an uninfiltrated consciousness and pragmatism that demand a kindness and logic which have been milked out of civilization. He can watch the punishment of the Duke and King which can certainly be justified and yet comment that he was "sorry for them poor, pitiful rascals... human beings *can* be awful cruel to one another"(Clemens, *Huckleberry Finn*, p. 182).

This basic "romantic-realistic quarrel" is meat for Twain's artistic palate because this dichotomy is illustrated best in Twain himself. The romantic, exalted Tom in him sees man as a subject for humour and merriment and dwells upon the boyhood dreams which rolled along with the Mississippi's currents. He is, then, "Tom Sawyer grown-up" in some ways, and the appeal of the beacons of success, applause, and universal approval is expressed in his donning of the role of popular "humourist and even clown"(Eliot, p. 330). As Huck says: "Tom had his store clothes on, and an audience --and that was always nuts for Tom Sawyer"(Clemens, *Huckleberry Finn*, p. 179). This sentimental and romantic side of Twain produced the imaginative veil which built *Tom Sawyer* and gloried in "circuses, revival meetings, minstrel shows... and patriotic holidays celebrated with spread-eagle speeches.""

However, Twain's Tom lacks autonomy because of the Huck that also dwells in Twain. This Huck sees past life's glittering veneer and perceives the evil and heart-soreness of human existence. He possesses the romanticism of Thoreau rather than that of Scott. He looks not at the laws, but at their effectiveness and their capacity for good. He, thus, bypasses mindless attention to tradition through his role as observer and outcast. Twain as Huck could not forget the dark intrusions of adulthood that shadowed his boyhood and embittered him in later adult life into skepticism and criticism of social institutions. Such experiences in *Huckleberry Finn* as the Sherburn-Boggs duel, the lynching and hunting down of runaway slaves, and such seamy characters as the town drunkard, Pap Finn (known in Hanibal, Twain's hometown, as Jimmy Finn) were based upon Twain's darker memories (Clemens, *Annotated Huckleberry Finn*, p.56).

As a base for *Huckleberry Finn*'s sequences, Twain saw or heard of, in his boyhood, "practical jokes brutal enough to unhinge their victims, insanity, the beaten lives of squatters and derelicts, hangings, drownings, rapes, lynchings, terminal alcoholism and murders" (Kaplan, p. 24). All of this grimness occurred in the passage of a childhood in that same sleepy town of Hannibal which had smiled so benevolently on Tom Sawyer as the town of Saint Petersburg in *Tom Sawyer*. This dichotomy of outlook and experience affected the course of Twain's art and is a major source of dynamic tension in *Huckleberry Finn*. Twain's writing may, thus, be seen as an indulging and then fighting back of the idealistic-romantic impulse.

As has been hinted, this impulse is fed by forcing the idealism of "bookishness" into life rather than the true moral character of life into books. All of Tom's pirate, detective, and "blood and thunder" reading is used as fodder for the vat of Tom's imagination (Clemens, *Annotated Huckleberry Finn*, p. 28). But, Twain heaps the most scorn and attributes the most damage to those books with *pretensions* such as those by Sir Walter Scott, James Fennimore Cooper, Cervantes, and *The Arabian Nights*. Twain's essay lambasting the general illogicality and pure bad writing demonstrated by Cooper is well-known. In *Huckleberry Finn*, he gives Tom that old "Cooper Indian" trick of betraying himself by stepping on a dry twig (Clemens, *Annotated Huckleberry Finn*, p. 62). The *Walter Scott* symbolically founders as a steamboat revealing Twain's disgust with that author who "set the world in love with dreams and phantoms... with the silliness and emptinesses, sham grandeurs, sham gauds, and sham chivalries of a brainless and worthless long-vanished society" (Clemens, *Annotated Huckleberry Finn*, p. 139). As Twain complained when trapped in a sick-bed with Scott: "It is impossible to feel an interest in these bloodless shams, these milk and water humbugs" (Clemens, *Letters*, p. 276). For Twain, Scott is the bombastic father of the Colonel Grangerfords and Tom Sawyers.

Similarly the deluded Don Quixote is invoked by Tom's ambushade of a Sunday School picnic which he paints up to historical chronicle proportions. Also, Tom's relationship to Huck in *Huckleberry Finn* (and *Tom Sawyer* to some degree) echoes that of Don Quixote and the matter-of-fact Sancho Panza who is more concerned with dinner than derring-do. In just such a way, Tom exhorts the dubious Huck to rub an old tin lamp for genie-conjuring purposes, in a reference to *The Arabian Nights* (Clemens, *Annotated Huckleberry Finn*, p. 73-74).

If Tom uses these literary opiates to cope with the moral issues of life such as slavery, Huck as "the most solitary figure in fiction" (Eliot, p. 329) has to come up with his own fresh perceptions separated as he is from society. Huck can only judge things from common sense and experience. He may take the role of Tom or Miss Watson in "educating" Jim about kings or the French language, but Huck never lets this artificial role carry on from talk into action. When he has to do something, he simply does whatever has to be done in order to do it. When he sees that his patronizing and superior attitude toward Jim is cruel and harmful, he goes against the whole society and "humbles himself to a nigger" (Clemens, *Annotated Huckleberry Finn*, pp. 150-152). When he lies, he does so in order to save himself or Jim from very real danger in contrast to Tom who keeps back his knowledge of Jim's free status in order to satisfy his craving for a liberation-adventure. When Tom exclaims that he wanted "the adventure of it" and would have "wad-

ed neck-deep in blood to" get it (Clemens, *Annotated Huckleberry Finn*, p. 226) his lie seems to be an incredibly vicious playing with the freedom that Huck and Jim have struggled so desperately (physically and psychologically) to gain."

It is quite true that Huck's natural tendencies lie toward pleasure, the easy and uncomplicated escape from conscience, and a general antipathy toward cruelty rather than toward the development of a genuine Northern abolitionist conscience, as the critic, James M. Cox, points out.<sup>12</sup> Huck exhibits these qualities when he shows his repulsion at the extreme punishment of the confidence-men and the final battle of the feud. "It made me so sick I most fell out of the tree," he confesses about his witnessing of Buck Grangerford's death (Clemens, *Huckleberry Finn*, p. 94).

However, it is the very turning from such society-sanctioned viciousness that points to the good, untainted heart which, eventually, allows Huck to reject the machinery of that cruelty in his declaration, "All right, then, I'll go to hell!" (Clemens, *Huckleberry Finn*, p. 69) which is essentially a moral decision despite his passionate wish for *no* conscience. Cox portrays this statement as a betrayal and return to the moral framework of society from the natural pleasure principle; but truly this statement can certainly be more likely viewed as the product of Huck's turning from cruelty rather than the reversal of it (Cox, "Uncomfortable Ending," pp. 355-356).

This discussion of the symbolic nature and development of Tom and Huck leads, inevitably, to a consideration of the controversial ending of *Huckleberry Finn*, in which this symbolic dichotomy comes to an uncomfortable climax. This ending has aroused a veritable flood of critical opinions ranging from full or qualified approval to a dissatisfied disapproval. Much is said here about the disharmony in tone resulting from Tom taking center stage here which moves the stylistic quality away from the tumultuous, yet lyrical, sun-dappled days on the river which form the book's mid-section. The adult concerns of the journey are suddenly turned over to a child. Lionel Trilling explains that this ending is a purposeful device to retreat Huck to the background as he is not suited "to the attention and glamour which attended a hero at book's end" (Trilling, p. 326) in contrast to Tom's flamboyance. Eliot promotes the end as a cyclical reorientation to the mood of the Tom Sawyerish beginning (Eliot, p. 334).

However, a great many critics have severely criticised the end. Hemingway despised the section and advised that the reader "must stop where Nigger Jim is stolen from the boys. That is the real end. The rest is just cheating" (Clemens, *Annotated Huckleberry Finn*, p. 48). Leo Marx chides Eliot and Trilling and charges Twain with insufficient courage in dealing with the ill-fated end of a doomed search for freedom in a basically chained society.<sup>13</sup> Yet, after study of the symbolic characterization of Tom and Huck in *Huckleberry Finn*, the most plausible view of the ending lies in an expansion of this symbolic dimension. Thomas Arthur Gullason, Roy Harvey Pearce and Judith Fetterley (the last two in detail) support this basic thesis. In this scheme, Tom's reappearance at the Phelps' farm after Huck's crucial moral statement is a foil device which underlines the complete condemnation of society's "civilized" ways and results in Huck's final intention to "light out ahead of the rest."<sup>14</sup> Tom's appearance at the beginning of *Huckleberry Finn* is in keeping with the foolish idealism so strongly debunked in the end, but the implications and consequences of his behavior



take on a new light in the closing section. These serious consequences of romanticism are tied in with the general themes of man's inhumanity to man and the affirmation of Jim's human worth (he saves Tom despite Tom's treatment of him)(Gullason, p. 87).

How does Tom's behavior differ so radically here from his youthful hijinks in the beginning? Well, Tom's actions in the first portion may finally become too far-fetched and unsatisfying for his gang (they disband), but these actions never seriously harm anyone and they do not tamper with so serious an issue as the freedom of a man (Gullason, pp. 89-90). As Judith Fetterley points out, there is a great deal of difference between giving a sobbing youngster a nickel to keep quiet about imaginary robbery plans and reimbursing Jim with forty dollars for his very freedom and peace of mind (Fetterley, p. 445).

The middle matter of the book undertakes this shift from the world of childish recklessness into adult problems and problem adults. Huck struggles with the cornerstones of society and makes his declaration. He is, consistently, disgusted with the behavior that he sees along the river, but keeps a fond vision of Tom and often wonders what Tom would do in a certain situation. When he (Huck) and Jim discover the wrecked *Walter Scott*, Huck muses, "Do you reckon Tom Sawyer would ever go by this thing? ... He'd call it an adventure... and he'd land on that wreck if it was his last act... I wish Tom Sawyer *was* here" (Clemens, *Huckleberry Finn*, p. 57). Of course, Huck *has* Tom Sawyers all around him; he just has not realized this fact. He does not connect the civilized brutes that he encounters with an adult extension of the Tom Sawyeresque view of the world.

Nevertheless, upon retrospect, analogue characters throughout the river journey foreshadow the new perspective of the reader on Tom Sawyer in the last section. Such characters include Miss Watson, the King and the Duke, and especially the Grangerfords. All of these characters use tradition and genteel ways to conceal their own native brutality from others. Miss Watson, the con men, and Tom accept things because that was the way that things were written down, whether in the Bible or in romance novels. The con men use literary pretensions (Shakespeare's plays) and noble titles to glorify themselves and make money, although they certainly don't delude themselves as Tom does. They merely prey on others' stupidity. However, it is the Grangerfords' "code of honor" that calls up Tom the most. They bow to each other, turn to face the bullets, and pay strict attention to feud protocol. Behind this lies black hypocrisy and grim death (Fetterley, pp. 447-450).

All through the trip down the Mississippi, these characters' basic barbarity is contrasted with Huck's clear-eyed, if not judgemental, view of them. Huck is forced to deal with adult issues and to take a stand. He chooses to reject the rules of the society and to follow what seems instinctively right to him. But he does not yet correlate these adults with their germ in Tom Sawyer. So, in the last section when Huck meets his old friend, he is glad to turn things over to him. Huck has so much faith in and respect for Tom that he is even a bit shocked that "a boy who was respectable and well-brung-up" (Clemens, *Huckleberry Finn*, p. 184) would buck society as he himself is doing. As mature as Huck has become, he never dreams that childish silliness lies behind this supposed earnestness and that Tom knows that he is setting a freed man free. Thus, the basic static

character of Tom is set against the dynamic one of Huck and is clearly symbolic of that society Huck has met along the river. Tom is a child, but heretofore he has only dealt with equally childish matters, and his handling of the crucial matter of Jim's freedom is horrifying in light of the insights given to Huck and the reader in the mid-section (Gullason, pp. 89-90).

Tom can no longer be seen as a harmless child, but as a very harmful potential adult who will be at least as blindly insensitive as "good people" like the Phelps' (Marx, p. 343) and perhaps as dangerous as the murderous Grangerfords. Huck argues with Tom's impractical escape plans and though he seems to give in, his disillusionment is encapsulated in his avowal to "light out" to the Territory before the others. He has thoroughly recognized and rejected the hypocrites, such as Tom, who make up the civilizing influence (Gullason, p. 90).

Thus, although the end is, perhaps, overly long and farcical, the viewing of it from the symbolic perspective can give a clue into Twain's purposes. Twain makes boyhood real, and throws some *meaning* in there to heighten the flavor. The realistic handling of Tom and Huck is what makes the reader take the symbolism to heart. In *Huckleberry Finn*, Twain lays bare the hearts of his characters, the soul of society, and his own spirit.



## NOTES

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*Photo by Liz Bailey*

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**“DO I DARE, AND, DO I DARE?”**

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# BEHIND CELLAR DOORS

*Anna Crowe Dewart*

The cellars for storing potatoes lay about the desert-turned-farmland like Indian mounds and beckoned to a child of four or five with the same mysterious offerings. I remember cautiously creeping down the rutted slope toward the great, wooden doors -- terrified but unable to stop myself -- as if some special siren were calling me. I would slip through the doors and stand waiting, peering into the cold, dark gloom, watching as the form of a great curve took shape above me, its arc held in place by huge beams straining against the earth. Sometimes I had courage enough to edge my way down the sliver of sunlight just far enough to make out the sepia-gray speckles of potato-heaps held back from the black tunnel by enormous staked and slotted boards. When I dared, I would take a deep breath of the thick, musty, decaying odor before the dark, womblike earth-ness of it all compelled me to take flight, back into the protecting sunlight. I would lean against the doors, hugging their warmth to my back and resolve to go much deeper into that vaulted abyss of inviting terror -- next time. Maybe someday "it" would not longer "get" me and I could calmly walk away when I wished, perhaps even go all the way through, to the other end.



## THE HOLE

*Listlessly the half-closed eyes watch  
As a thousand yesterdays slowly melt into more and more.  
What does this mean for us, you ask yourselves -  
To you life is just a deadly bore, and the only reality - war.*

*But I have plans for my life  
And while in vain you struggle for change,  
I try to stay out of firing range,  
But these days an empty trench is hard to find.*

*I battle to save myself  
As a thousand tomorrows trickle down to only a few.  
What does this mean for us, you ask yourselves.  
I only wish you knew.*

*Hide in a hole and save yourself trouble  
Is my advice for the day.  
Then when it's all over, climb over the rubble  
And chase the vultures away.*

Darla Ratcliff

*Dragons haunt the dreams of saints:  
Smoke and fire curl round their feet  
As they pray to God their is, their ain't,  
And ask for stout heart to forestall retreat.*

*Dragons hunt in twilight hours,  
When it's too dark to track them down.  
They search for bones near ivory towers  
Built on the outskirts of small towns.*

*Dragons hide in daylight bright,  
They sleep in dank and musty caves,  
They curse the sun that drains their might,  
They dream of days of knights and knaves.*

*Dragons wake as evening nears,  
They trim their claws and smooth their scales.  
They flourish on man's inmost fears,  
They live forever in his tales.*

*Dragons haunt the dreams of saints,  
They haunt the dreams of sinners too,  
But the dragon that haunts mankind the most  
Is found even in a heart that is true.*

Steve Ealy



# R.A.I.N

*R . Ra . Rai . Rain  
Glittering in the sky  
Like a leaky water faucet carried to infinity  
Like the silence in the night  
Torturing you to a complete fright.*

*Rain . Rain . Rain . Rain  
Languages spoken together  
All birds of a feather  
Taking you down there below  
With a tone of silent awe.*

*Rain . Rain . Rain . Rain  
Makes you wander about the sky  
To a chilled or naked eye  
To the fields a potent substance  
To us all an unliked fluvience.*

*Rain . Rai . Ra . R  
Melancholically I say, rain causes sorrow and dismay  
Rain causes drowsiness and sleep  
Rain can hurt you real deep  
Makes your mind go back in time  
Different places, 1979  
Where my images didn't shine  
Where happiness was not yet mine.*

*R . R . R . R . . . .  
Rain suddenly ends  
In the mountains, in the plains  
Happiness turns into pain  
As I wish for some more R.a.i.n.*

Marius

# NIGHTMARE

*A spider slid down over my head  
And spun a web around my bed  
I shouted, "What the heck?  
I'm no bloody insect."  
That you may be, the spider said.  
But your body looked so sweet  
All snug in your bed.  
This sent cold shivers down my spine  
Until finally I realized.  
It was only a Nightmare.*

J. Thomas Maddox

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# ANGRY EARTH

*Seething and smouldering my flesh burns with  
pulsating fire.  
My neck and forehead throb.  
Wounded I stand and scream with  
echoes in my mind:  
Purge me, crush me, rake me like the barren earth.  
The tides of the earth still flow:  
Undulating with waves of shock  
buried deep in the still.  
    Grain against Grain  
    Stone against stone  
    Continent against continent*

*I leap up to the sky and flee like an angel on wing.  
until my lungs are pulled tight by the vacuum.  
The silence grows and my limbs freeze numb.  
Then my heart beats aloud as I reach for the stars,  
and a tear like quicksilver rolls down my cheek*

*The hand of the sphere wrenches my body  
and I plunge downward  
Through the hot hoary breath of the earth.  
The stars fade away and the earth gapes  
Wide and devours me whole.*

Andrew Lopez

# TALMADGE BRIDGE

*Like a pair of green suspenders  
The Bridge stretches  
Across the Savannah River.*

*Oh, you once wore the top hat and tails  
Displaying the pride  
Of a former Georgia Governor.*

*Now you lie  
And sleep in the sun  
Like an old alligator.*

*Oh, Sojourners  
Still speak of you,  
As "that Big! Big! Bridge."*

*But the local people  
Recall the number of jumpers  
That leap into the muddy waters below.*

*Splash!                      Splash!  
                                    Splash!*

*Why do you swallow up  
Memories and lives  
Spitting them out into the Atlantic Ocean?*

*Only the sea gulls know  
And they're not telling  
A soul.*

J. Thomas Maddox



# NOW I LAY ME. . .

*Catherine Mulvihill*

*This work has been selected to receive the Lillian Spencer and Frank W. Spencer Foundation Award for best submission to CALLIOPE.*

Sleep. . . I haven't laid my head on a pillow or my body on a bed for more than four days now, and to be perfectly honest, I don't think I ever will again. And I don't know whom to blame. Perhaps it doesn't matter anymore, but if I could throw the guilt on someone or something other than my own horrendous imagination, I could somehow justify this.

I must explain. . . Less than a week ago, the songs of the birds still vibrated through my body every morning and shook me from my sleep. Less than a week ago I still prided myself on my ability to rise with the sun and jump from my bed without any complaints from my joints or my limbs or even my mind. And, when night rolled around, I never spent endless hours tossing and turning and counting sheep. Once my head hit the pillow my eyes closed and my dreams captured my mind. Yet, after last Sunday, the birds failed to sing and my dreams failed to conquer the sheep.

Last Sunday morning, like every weekend morning, started out beautifully. As always, I tiptoed out of bed, careful not to wake my wife, Jane, and crept downstairs. Then I settled down at the kitchen table with my orange juice in one hand -- I never used to drink coffee -- and my paper in the other. By the time I finished the sports section, I heard the light footsteps of my daughter. Now, I realize that every man believes that his daughter is the most perfect little girl in the world, but Jenny is no illusion. She has the kind of mischievous smile and kind of startling blue eyes that make other fathers turn to stare at us when we walk down the street. You can imagine what that does to my ego.

Anyway, by the time Jenny reached the kitchen I was already crouched behind the door. When she entered, I swooped her up in my arms and lifted her until her head touched the ceiling. Amid our usual giggles and chuckles -- Jenny chuckles, I giggle -- we set about scrambling eggs and browning toast and mixing more orange juice. Then, like every Sunday morning before it, we prepared three trays and carried them up to the bedroom. By the time we reached the top stair, Jane was already dressing for church. Now, we aren't a particularly religious family in fact, until last Sunday we hadn't been ambitious enough to spend our favorite day of the week in starched clothes among equally starched people. I guess that was my fault, though. Jane grew up in a strict Episcopalean home where church was as important as work or school or even eating and drinking. But after we married, my "religious laziness" rubbed off on her. I'm not an atheist; Lord knows if I were none of this would have happened, and I would be in bed, sound asleep, right now. I'm just the "silent" type of parishoner. Church and religion are states of mind to me, rather than traditions and customs and outward appearances. I don't even pray out loud. My conversations with God have always been conversations in my mind -- as much a "diary to myself" as a chat with the Heavenly Father. I've always liked it better that way. Until now. Now I wish that I had paid more attention to formalities. .

*Calliope, 31*

But, last Sunday was one of those days when Jane felt guilty for not making outward appearances, and my usual suggestions of picnics and matinees weren't working. So, when Jenny said that she wanted to "visit God too," I pulled my only three-piece suit out of the closet. And of course, the sermon was as boring as ever; I covered my bulletin with circles and squares and a good likeness of the minister. I envied Jenny as she cried goodbye to her teacher -- her arms full of papers and pictures and a "round thing with my handprint in it for Mommy to hang on the wall." I prayed, silently of course, to spend my next Sunday in church making handprints for Mommy's wall.

Actually, the real problem didn't arise until that night. While Jane tucked Jenny into bed, I sat back on the loveseat, popcorn in hand, and waited for *Star Wars* to appear on the screen. Jane and I had seen it five times, but I wanted to fool around more than anything else anyway. Suddenly screams of "No, Mommy, I don't want to say it! No, Mommy, I won't! No!" interrupted my fantasies. At first I thought that Jenny was refusing to go to bed, but as her protests increased, I rushed up the stairs. Apparently, Jane, in her new, saintly mood, had decided to teach Jenny a bedtime prayer -- a lesson that we had neglected up until then. The prayer was simple enough -- a prayer that Jane insisted every little kid learns. I'd never heard it before, but then, as I've told you, I've always avoided traditions. And it was a cute little rhyme, at first hearing.

Now I lay me down to sleep,  
I pray the Lord my soul to keep,  
And if I die before I wake,  
I pray the Lord my soul to take.

Jenny recited the first two lines perfectly, but when Jane prompted her to repeat the rest, she became hysterical. I felt that if Jenny didn't want to say the rest, we shouldn't press her, but Jane insisted that Jenny was just being stubborn. This is where I could blame everything on Jane. If she had just let the matter drop, if she had just let it all alone, if she had not tried to make the poor kid explain herself, I wouldn't be trying to explain myself. But Jane has one of those "logical minds"; she must have an explanation for everything. Unfortunately, I didn't try to stop her logic, and, unfortunately, Jenny's explanation was far too logical itself. At first I had just repeated the rhyme -- mimicked it without listening to the words.

Now I lay me down to sleep,  
I pray the Lord my soul to keep,  
And if I die before I wake,  
I pray the Lord my soul to take.

But we had always taught Jenny to think before she spoke.

"But Mommy," she said, "that's like giving God permission to let me die. That's like assuming you're gonna die and God might take it wrong. Mommy. I don't want to die!"

Jane, unable to hold back her laughter, gave up. Red faced, she told Jenny to forget all about it, have pleasant dreams, and not let the bed bugs bite -- the usual bedtime goodbyes.

Once downstairs, Jane picked up her bowl of popcorn and snuggled close to me on the loveseat. Obviously, she didn't want to watch *Star Wars* a sixth time either. But for some reason I couldn't get that little ditty, that stupid rhyme, that damn prayer, out of my head:

Now I lay me down to sleep,  
I pray the Lord my soul to keep,  
And if I die before I wake,  
I pray the Lord my soul to take.

For some reason all I could do was stare at Luke Skywalker while I thought, saw, and heard that prayer over and over in my mind. Jane either gave up trying to penetrate my thoughts, or grew disgusted with me, because I eventually found myself alone, with a full bowl of popcorn in my lap, an empty one by my side, and the National Anthem blaring at me from the tube. I've grown to hate that song. . .

Oh say can I lay  
Meeee down to sleep. . .

I flipped on the hall light and raced up the stairs; the words grew louder all the time. When I reached my room and discovered that Jane had pulled back my sheets and covers so that I could crawl right in, I felt silly. Childish. Pretty ridiculous. I threw on my pajamas, slid into bed, and resolved to put the entire night out of my mind. I switched off the light and closed my eyes, knowing that I would be asleep in a matter of seconds. Thinking that I would be asleep in a matter of seconds. Wishing that I could. . .

Now I lay me down to sleep,  
  
be asleep in a. . .  
  
I pray the Lord my soul to keep,  
  
matter of seconds. . .

But if I die before I wake,  
  
It was useless.  
  
I pray the Lord my soul to take.

I might have drifted off to sleep, the prayer might have bored me enough to make me sleep, yet I began to think about what was actually running through my head. I kept reciting a prayer -- a prayer to God -- over and over in my mind. And he was listening! I could hear Jenny's voice, "No, Mommy, God might take it wrong. No, Mommy, I don't want to die!"



"No, God," I cried, "please don't listen. This isn't what I want to say -- it's just a dumb, stupid, meaningless ditty. It's just. . ."

I pray the Lord my soul to take.

I knew it was stupid, it was dumb, it was childish. But I couldn't stop mimicking that damn prayer, couldn't stop praying in my head, couldn't stop telling God that it was all right to take my soul!

I spent that entire night too scared to go to sleep and too obsessed to be logical (or illogical) about the entire thing.

The next morning as I dressed for work, Jane rolled her refreshed head towards me and asked me how I had slept. I couldn't tell her. I couldn't tell her that I spent the entire night staring into blackness and repeating the words to a child's prayer over and over in my head. She would have laughed, or rolled her eyes, or thought that I had lost my mind. So I told her that I had slept peacefully, then went downstairs to fix myself a cup of coffee. I drank at least ten cups of the wretched liquid before the day ended.

But it wasn't until later that night, as Jane tucked Jen into bed, that I began "saying" that cursed prayer again. And the more I thought about going to sleep, the more I repeated the curse.

Sleep, now I lay me down to  
Keep, I pray the Lord my soul to  
Wake, and if I die before I  
Take, I pray the Lord my soul to. . .

Jumbled, mixed-up, any way I thought about it, I still gave the Heavenly Father permission to let me die. It was then that I began to realize that I was going to die no matter what. I could only go so long without sleep before God, or something, took my soul anyway.

I pray the Lord my soul to take

Only so long before I would go to sleep

Now I lay me down to sleep,

And never wake up.

And if I die before I wake,

I didn't go to sleep that night. Or the next. Or the next. . . I tried everything from sleeping pills to nursery rhymes.

Hickory, dickory, dock,  
The mouse ran up the clock  
And if I die  
Before I wake  
Hickory, dickory, DEAD!

So here I am. It's now Thursday -- no, Friday! I think. Five days and four nights since that God-awful Sunday. I couldn't hide my terrors from

Jane. When I first told her my predicament she did exactly what I expected. She laughed, then she rolled her eyes, then she told me I was crazy. Finally, I began saying the phrases out loud,

Now I lay me down

as we were lying in our bed,

to sleep. I pray the Lord

or between huge gulps of coffee.

my soul to keep. And if I die

Before long I was kneeling at the side of my bed with my hands clasped --my eyes staring toward the Heavens!

before I wake. I pray the Lord

So Jane packed her bags and took Jenny to a motel.

my soul to take.

So now here I sit, alone, counting the days by the number of times the National Anthem plays on the tube. My house, which had always been the safest, most comfortable place in the world, no longer seems like my house. It had been my haven, my resort, my escape from the pressures of the outside world. The ultimate dream -- right from its white picket fence, to its yellow kitchen curtains, to its velvety red carpet. The walls always vibrated with Jenny's soft chuckles, and the air always smelled of roast beef or fresh bread or apple pie. Oh, but not now. Now that Jane and Jenny are gone, the fence, with its spiked, ivory pickets, confronts me when I step inside the gate -- a row of white teeth inviting me to pass through them into the belly of their owner. The belly reeks of the yellow bile which covers its openings, and I must force myself to sit upon the blood-red surface of its interior. No longer does laughter fill the halls and vibrate in my ears. Only the methodical words of that damn prayer bounce off the ceiling and the floor and echo in my soul.

Now I lay me . . .

It's like some horrible nightmare -- a nightmare that I can never wake up from because I never went to sleep in the first place.

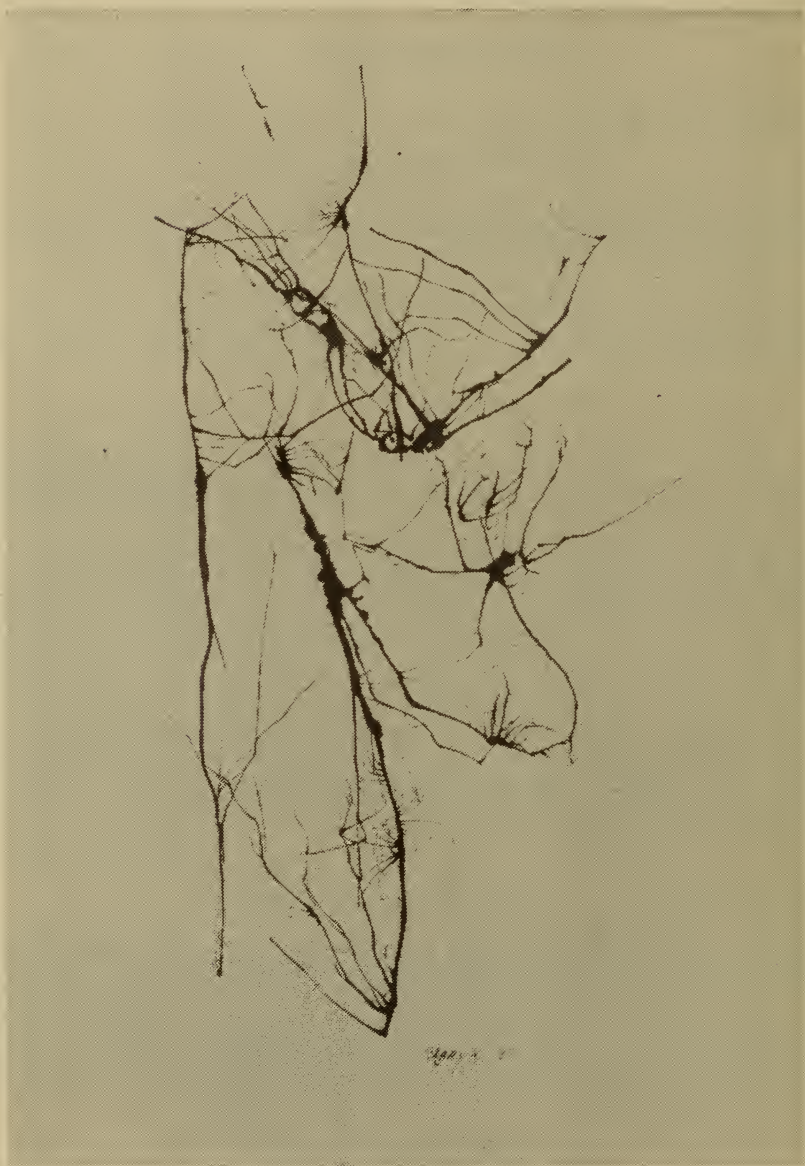
Yes, I am probably blowing this whole affair out of proportion. Yet my mind no longer knows the meaning of proportion. Like the endless echoing in the air, I'm doomed to stay within this belly, continually bouncing off the blood-red walls while my mind says to me and to God and to anyone who will listen. . .

Now I lay me down to sleep,  
I pray dear Lord just let me sleep  
And if I die before I sleep  
I pray, I pray, I pray. . .sleep. . .

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# BROKEN UNICORNS



*Drawing by Mary Howard*

# SPARROW

*Sparrow,*

*Chanteur of the false night,  
Why does my song  
not sing?*

*Master of enchanting sounds,  
Are your wings made of magic,  
Your song a sorcerer's speech?*

*Oh, what a wretch am I.  
I dare not sing nor fly.  
The prayers for voice and lifting wing  
Have not been answered  
For me.*

*I am but a poor man  
With a heart of endless scars.  
Oh, Sparrow, come and sing  
To me.*

*I can crawl and walk and run.  
I dare not leave the ground.  
I fly, Bird, only when I sleep.*

*Gift of nature, how I wish I were  
Thee.*

# SHADES OF GRAY

*Sandra Crapse*

Tennessee William's Amanda is very human in *The Glass Menagerie*. That is, she is inconsistent: she is neither all good nor all bad, but a mixture of both. She is thoughtfully tender as well as unintentionally cruel. There is much to admire about Amanda while there is a lot laugh at also. She is admirable in her tenderness and love for her children. Her love for Tom and Laura can arouse our pity because of her inability to understand where or how she has failed them. On the other hand, she is ridiculous and laughable in her Southern-belle mannerisms and her high expectations for her children. Amanda is a paradox.

Amanda's Southern-belle mannerisms and her high expectations for Tom and Laura are both laughable and ridiculous. Amanda lives in another time period -- the Old South, with all its grandeur. The glorious clothes, the great balls, and the gracious manners were all part of the Old South, and Amanda remembers only the good times. To her, everything was better then. One of Amanda's fantasies about her earlier life occurs one night at the table after dinner when she tells Laura to "be the lady this time" (scene I, pg. 971). Amanda wants Laura to sit and enjoy her coffee while she is waiting for her gentleman callers. In the meantime, says Amanda, "I'll be the darky," (scene I, pg. 971) and clean up the table and dishes. Because Amanda does not want to accept her life the way it is, she fantasizes about the past constantly.

If Amanda herself cannot accept her life the way it is and live in the present, how can Tom and Laura? They cannot; therefore, they cannot live up to her high expectations either. When they see Amanda escape her problems by going back to her youthful days, they follow her example, and each chooses a safe time period for themselves. Tom leaps to the future, thinking of the adventure of being a merchant marine and eventually becoming a well-known poet. Laura, because she is crippled, cannot cope with business school at the present time, nor can she see a marriage in the future. Laura selects a never-never time: neither past, present, or future, but a world of glass and reflections. Trapped in the different times, each falls victim to illusions and fantasies.

Amanda can arouse our pity because of her inability to understand where or how she has failed her children. She is the instrument in bringing Laura and Tom to their desperate situations. She cripples them psychologically and inhibits their own quest for maturity and self-realization.

Since her husband's desertion, Amanda has depended on Tom heavily for the support of the family and she wants him to continue to work, at least until she can get Laura settled. When looking at Laura's timid personality, Tom feels he could be working forever at the shoe factory. He has secretly applied to the Merchant Marine, and when Tom's acceptance letter arrives, Amanda finds it. Amanda and Tom argue, and Amanda stresses what she hoped, she lovingly comforts Laura. Amanda has an aura of "dignity and tragic beauty" (scene VII, pg. 1010) in the final scene.



expects of him: "[when] Laura has... married, [with] a home of her own, [and is] independent... you'll be free to go... whichever way the wind blows!

But until that time... Find... some nice young [gentleman caller]... for Sister'"(scene IV, pg. 983). On Tom's young shoulders, Amanda has placed the burdensome responsibility of the family left by the father. She has not let Tom discover himself or what he wants in life. By inhibiting him this way, she has halted his growth.

With Laura, Amanda has done the same thing in a different way. Amanda wants Laura to have the same kind of life that she did as a young girl, the life of a Southern belle who has "seventeen! -- gentleman callers!"(scene I, pg. 971). With her unreal expectations, Amanda projects her "Blue Mountain" image on Laura instead of letting Laura develop in her own way and time. If Amanda had not pushed Laura so hard into becoming something that she was not, Laura would not have been so self-conscious of her failings; she might have had more of a chance at a normal life. Since Laura cannot live up to her mother's expectations, she withdraws herself into a world of glass that is only a reflection of the real world.

Amanda is admirable in her tenderness and love for her children, especially Laura. Amanda (like most mothers) loves her children, and this is shown throughout the play. Laura's future is Amanda's top priority and concern. She wants Laura to go to business school so that Laura can support herself. When Amanda finds that Laura has dropped out of the school, Amanda reverts to plan B: marriage. Amanda will be totally happy only if she can get Laura settled. She enlists Tom's help for this plan. Amanda wants Tom to bring home a gentleman caller for Laura. When Tom brings home Jim and the visit does not go as well as Amanda had

Likewise, with Tom, Amanda's concern is shown in the way she mothers him: "don't smoke too much, don't become a drunkard, and don't drink hot coffee." Amanda cautions Tom, "that the future becomes the present, the present the past, and the past turns into everlasting regret if you don't plan for it!"(scene V, pg. 987). She tells him that with a little more "get up," he could have "a fairly responsible job" like Jim does (scene V, pg. 987). Amanda would like Tom to become a young business executive, but she also lets Tom know over and over again how much they depend on him; he is the man of the family, and she is proud of his efforts.

Amanda has a positive attitude about herself nearly all the time, and even during the most trying times she has the attitude of "disappointed but not discouraged." She depends on Tom and his job a lot, but she does not just sit home herself. She has a job selling magazines and "working at Famous and Barr"(scene II, pg. 972). Even when Tom and Amanda have had an argument and she makes the statement, "My devotion has made me a witch and so I make myself hateful to my children!" she comes back with, "Try and you will succeed!"(scene IV, pg. 981).

So while Amanda is ridiculous, she is also respectable. We can identify with her because of her mixed nature of both good and bad qualities. Her tenderness and love for her children are laudable while her illusions about the "Old South" and her expectations for Tom and Laura can awaken our pity for her. Amanda is laughable and ridiculous as we all are, and we can equate ourselves with her in our own efforts to deal with life and its numerous problems. She is truly a paradox as all humans are. We are neither all good nor all bad, neither all black nor all white, but shades of gray.

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Citations are found in David Bergman and Daniel Mark Epstein's *HeathGuide to Literature* (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath and Co., 1984).

## POMP AND PAGEANTRY

*Half a fortnight ere St. Patrick's Day,  
Fair leprechauns come out for their foreplay.  
Twenty smiling beauties primp and pace --  
Tangled 'midst hair curlers, lipstick, lace.  
The title, "Miss St. Patrick's Day," they crave:  
To ride a float through drunken crowds, and wave.*

*A crowd has gathered 'round the stage below;  
Music thunders, wine and whiskey flow.  
Upstairs the ladies polish glassy lips,  
Walk the floor to prime their swaying hips.  
The mirrors on the wall claim all attention,  
Save one young woman's: waiting without tension  
She twists one curl around one slender finger;  
On her the eyes of all the others linger.*

*The prize the previous year she nearly grasped,  
But in the final moments her charm lapsed.  
The luck of Erin smiled upon a redhead --  
And only golden tresses fell from her head.  
With vengeance she prepared to try again;  
The year she spent in buffing silky skin.  
Weeks of hunger ate away a pound:  
Fine bones preferred she over cheeks so round.*

*And now the startling beauty she was born to,  
Splendor of wild roses under soft dew  
Has been transformed by her to dolly porcelain;  
Flames of fury glow beneath her glass-skin.  
But confidence and ease are all her form breathes:  
Her graceful strut conceals the way her mind seethes.  
She's practiced, prayed, and polished all her charms:  
She sparkles, like the rhinestones on her arms.*

*Across the room a girl looks on in shyness,  
Oblivious to the veteran's secret slyness.  
She combs her copper curls with quivering hands --  
Sparkling rings of auburn, she commands  
Each to its place; they cover her fair shoulders.  
In her eyes two emerald fires smoulder  
A gown of shamrock green completes the picture:  
An Irish lass, but not the judges' pick, sure!  
A pretty girl she is, but no great beauty --  
Blondie feels the nearness of her booty.*



*The show begins; the girls all smile and shimmer.  
The audience yowls like cats awaiting dinner.  
Whistles, shouts, name-calling, lude suggestions,  
They rival schoolboys, fresh-free from suppression.  
Here inside the bar -- no kids allowed --  
Second Childhood rules this lively crowd.  
As each fair lady glides across the stage,  
Men reach and grab like monkeys through a cage.*

*The golden beauty, ready for the crowd,  
Swaggers across, smiles, assured and proud.  
Gratification envelopes her skin;  
She revels in the tangle and the din.  
Smiling promises flow from her blue eyes,  
Capturing hearts with sweet, unspoken lies.*

*The fair-skinned lass follows, stepping lightly;  
Behind her smile, she grits her teeth so tightly.  
And in the end the red hair wins again --  
An answering crimson colors the veteran's skin.  
Her rage she holds until she is alone;  
The grace which carried her to stage is gone.  
She stumbles upstairs, blind with pain or ire,  
A wiser woman certainly would retire,  
But this one spends her days in spas and salons,  
Eagle-proud, she flexes polished talons.  
Making plans for show again next spring,  
She preens each feather, smooths each ruffled wing.*

*And those who cheered her on to harsh defeat  
Find the morning after not so sweet.  
They work and wait for night to take them back --  
The dog's hair calls them downtown in a pack  
To wake from nightmares of sobriety  
Into their reeling world of revelry.*

Margaret Brockland

# TIME IS THE ESSENCE OF LIFE

Laura Kinzie

Time is for us mortals the essence of life. We can be in control of our lives and therefore in control of our time, or we can be committed to an ideal or belief which we feel merits our time, or we may be people who waste time. These are three alternatives for the use of time during our lives. We must consider time a precious resource. Once it is gone, it is gone forever and will never come again. In the poem, "Ulysses," we see a conqueror king who is undoubtedly in complete control of his own life and regrets the day he became idle because of his age. This poem is about his desire to "drink life to the lees"(1.7, p. 541). He wants to pursue, to continue his adventures. In the poem, "After Apple Picking," we see a once hard working man, tired and exhausted. He has spent most of his life laboring for "a great harvest I myself desired"(1.29, p. 837). The desire for being a lover is present in Prufrock, but because of fear and lack of purpose, his time is meaningless. By comparing "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" to "The Apple Picker" and "Ulysses," we should find evidence of three different methods of using the irreplaceable commodity of time.

Ulysses is untouched by time or age, and the apple picker is tired and ready to give up his work, but Prufrock's life represents an example of the poorest use of time. He is a procrastinator. Prufrock is not bold enough to ask a real person to go with him on a journey to an unknown place, so he has an imaginary lover come along with him. We soon begin to understand this situation as the hell of Prufrock's mind. It is inhabited by shallow, superficial people who have no depth, reminding us of the characters in *Alice in Wonderland*. Unlike the rabbit who constantly cries, "I'm late, I'm late for a very important date," Prufrock's theme is, "there will be time, there will be time"(1.26, p. 792). He wonders: should he or should he not dare to ask? Since the title of the poem is "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," we surmise that he is asking for his lover's affections. He is never able to fully put his desire into thought patterns. Once again he asks, "and should I then presume?/And how should I begin[?]"(1.68, p. 793). Prufrock kids himself into believing "there will be time"(1.23, p. 792) for all the trivialities of his tedious life. He changes his face or personality to please each person he meets. He digresses into indecision even in the smallest matters, for he feels he is not important. He spends his time in a fantasy world and when confronted by life he will surely drown in a sea of his own making. Contrasting the life of Ulysses with that of Prufrock, we find two almost opposite extremes. There are no limitations of time with Ulysses. He cannot rest from adventure even in his old age. He talks of sailing again with his mariners who have shared much of his life, and who are now also old. Like Prufrock and Ulysses, the apple picker is old and very tired. It is winter, and he has seen his face reflected in the ice from the drinking trough. The old, tired man is sleepy, and he lets the ice fall and break. He welcomes the rest, and dreams of apples which are magnified.

They are huge apples which appear and disappear much as the people of his life do. Picking these apples makes him weary of "the great harvest I myself [desire]"(1.27, 28, 29, p.837).

The characters have definite dislikes and feelings regarding death, and for Prufrock the feelings fall under one heading -- fear. His fear of being ridiculed is stifling. He allows it to cut away his life, and that empty shell of a man fears death as much as life. His allusions to John the Baptist and Lazarus indicate the irony of Prufrock's situation as he compares himself with these holy men who were totally dedicated to God, and who were willing to die for Him. Prufrock has nothing for which to live or die. Ulysses would certainly disagree with Prufrock's philosophy as he can think of nothing worse than to pause, or make an end. He compares his inactivity to a sword. Not wanting to rust, but to shine in use, he realizes that to breathe alone is no indication of life. He thinks it vile to have rested for three days while ignoring his desire to follow knowledge. To his mariners Ulysses says, "You and I are old;/...death closes all. Some work of noble note may yet be done" (1149-51, 52). The last line reflects the truth as seen by Ulysses. Time never ceases for him as he invites his friends, saying, "Tis not too late to seek a newer world"(157, p. 543). The apple picker is done with his work. He is through picking apples although there are indications of work to be done: an unfilled barrel, two or three unpicked apples on a bough. He regrets those apples which he missed or let fall for they went to the cider-apple heap "as of no worth" (1.38, p. 838). This makes us think of the apples lost as those opportunities missed in life, not missed because of procrastination as with Prufrock, but missed because there is too much for one man to do. This will trouble the apple picker. He realizes his human limitations as he contemplates the sleep which may be very long, another way of speaking of his death.

The purpose in life for each of the three men is reflected by the direction in which he travels. Prufrock wants desperately to appear sophisticated. He wears all the right colors and still says, "there will be time to turn back and descend the stair"(1.39, p. 792). This is a clear indication of his lack of confidence in himself. He quickly decides that he should have been "a pair of ragged claws/scuttling across the floor of silent seas"(1.73, 74). This is a comparison similar to Prufrock's direction, which is backward like a crab. Not only does Prufrock fantasize the asking of questions, but he also interprets the answers of his lover. Suppose she says, "that is not what I meant at all"(1.97, 98). This will certainly crush Prufrock's desire to appear sophisticated, and can be cited as his purpose in life. The purpose of Ulysses is to use his time to seek knowledge. He views all "experience as an arch... whose margin fades forever and ever when I move"(1.21, p. 542). This has the effect of pointing Ulysses in a forward direction. The apple picker in the Robert Frost poem gives us a picture of an orchard, well-picked, and a two pointed ladder reaching toward heaven. His direction is upward. Time is worn into his instep from the pressure of a ladder round. He smells the scent of apples and hears the rumbling sound as the loads come in. His purpose in life is to serve others and God by using his time to the fullest.

We have looked at three alternatives for time utilization. We are not all endowed with the resources of Ulysses, but we do share the same number of hours in each day, along with Prufrock and the apple picker. Most of us

will probably spend our lives much like the apple picker. We may sometimes have bad experiences like Prufrock, or really exciting times as in the poem, "Ulysses." However we choose to live our lives, or use our time, let us remember that time is a resource and it cannot be renewed. Time is the essence of life.

Citations are found in David Bergman and Daniel Mark Epstein's *Heath Guide to Literature* (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath and Co., 1984).



## BAMBOO

*Tall graceful grass  
You tickle the skies  
You beat out an ancient  
rhythm with the wind  
You dance without ever moving*

*Your song can be heard in the  
Knocking of tropic evening breezes  
The pounding of typhoon winds.  
You drink up the rams  
Shelter, clothe, and feed*

*Teacher of Confucius  
How shallow man stands in your shadow.*

V. Seeger





# COLLABORATION/VICTIMIZATION

*Jerry Williams*

At the end of "The Blue Hotel" by Stephen Crane, one of the main characters, the Easterner, states that "every sin is the result of collaboration" (p. 252). This statement is incorrect because of the use of such an absolute word as *every* and because of the Swede's exclusion from this *collaboration*. Such works as "The Lottery" by Shirley Jackson, "King of the Bingo Game" by Ralph Ellison, as well as the previously mentioned short story support the statement that "[some] sins [are] the [results] of collaboration." However, neither this statement nor the first statement on sin frees the victims from responsibility concerning their own downfalls.

The Easterner makes his assumptive statement on sin and collaboration after admitting that he had seen Johnny cheat the Swede. The Easterner feels that if he would have revealed what he saw that evening and defended the Swede, then the Swede would not have been killed that night.

There are several definite problems in the conclusion drawn by the Easterner. The first problem exists in the number of men that the Easterner holds responsible. The Easterner is very wrong in his allotment of the liability in the Swede's death. Not only does the Easterner blame himself and the other men at the Palace Hotel on the night of the Swede's death, but he also blames them more than the gambler who actually killed the Swede:

[The gambler] isn't even a noun, He is a kind of adverb. ...in this case it seems to be... five men -- [the Easterner, the cowboy], Johnny, old Scully; and that fool of an unfortunate gambler came merely as a culmination, the apex of a human movement, and [he] gets all the punishment (p. 252).

The main problem with this statement exists in the omission of the person who was most responsible for the death of the Swede, the Swede himself. The Swede was responsible for his actions leading up to his death. Even if the Easterner would have helped the Swede by confessing to have seen Johnny cheat, the Swede probably would have ended up dead on the barroom floor anyway. The Easterner's confession or lack of confession probably would not have affected the Swede's "mightier than God" attitude and he probably would have reacted the same way. The support of the Easterner would probably have had the same effect on the Swede as did the drink of liquor that he had before the fight.

The assertion that the Easterner makes about his responsibility in the death of the Swede is incorrect. The Easterner is being too harsh on himself and those involved. The Easterner did what he thought was the correct thing to do at that time, and he did not know that the evening would end the



way it did. The distribution of responsibility and guilt is absurd because there is no way that they could have known that the Swede would be killed after leaving the Palace Hotel that night.

The Easterner was correct in one aspect, however. The gambler was not as guilty in the death of the Swede as someone else was. If one character had to be labelled the victim, it would be the gambler. He was directly victimized by the loud-talking Swede. The Swede himself is made to look like as entirely innocent victim. This is completely incorrect. The Swede was more responsible than anyone for his own death.

In "The Lottery," another protagonist is very responsible for her own death -- Mrs. Jessie Hutchinson. The reason that Mrs. Hutchinson can be held so responsible exists in her failure to protest the "game" before it started. She only began to protest after she had won, and she then protested for all the wrong reasons: "You didn't give him time enough to take any paper he wanted. I saw you. It wasn't fair!" Her action shows her lack of thought and her willingness to conform with what everyone else does even if it is wrong, as is the lottery. Had Mrs. Hutchinson not drawn the black dot, she probably would have been at the front of the crowd and holding the largest stone.

Even though the woman is very wrong for not taking a stand against the lottery beforehand, the peruser must still feel some pity for this "chosen" woman. She doesn't stand up against her community because the community has always resisted change. The result of this lack of change is an epidemic of thoughtlessness. Even the box that the lottery slips are drawn from is old and "splintered badly along one side to show the original wood color, ...but no one liked to upset even as much tradition as was represented by the black box"(p. 414). The woman's lack of thought, as well as everyone else's lack of thought, is caused by the collaboration of attitudes of all the people in the community. All of the people in the community victimize themselves by letting the lottery continue.

A very different example of collaboration and its effect on sin lies in the short story by Ralph Ellison, "King of the Bingo Game." The protagonist in this story is clearly a victim because he honestly tries to help himself. Even though he does attempt to help himself, he fails because of the collaboration of society against his race.

The protagonist tries to help himself by moving out of the rural South to the "opportunity-filled" North. The "King" realizes that his attempt to escape from his doom that followed him in the South is failing. His wife, Laura, is dying and he can not afford a doctor. It is also very obvious that he hasn't eaten in a long time: "I'm just broke, 'cause I got no birth certificate to get a job, and Laura 'bout to die 'cause we got no money for a doctor"(p. 406). This quote also shows that he has tried to get a job and can not because he has no birth certificate. It is as if the world is collaborating against him. Because of this collaboration, the man is forced to play a game of chance to try and win money. The protagonist is truly victimized.

The King dreams of

walking along a railroad trestle down South, and  
seeing the train coming, and running back as fast as

he could go, and hearing the whistle blowing, and getting off of the trestle to solid ground just in time, with the earth trembling beneath his feet, and feeling relieved as he ran down the cinder-strewn embankment onto the highway, and looking back and seeing with terror that the train had left the tracks and was following him right down the middle of the street, and all the white people laughing as he ran screaming....(p. 407).

This dream shows how the protagonist has attempted futilely to free himself from the dangers of being black and poor. He realizes that his cause has followed him even where he thought that it would not, just as the train followed him off the track.

The "King" makes another important realization after he wins the bingo game, and he is on the stage. He realizes

that his whole life [had been] determined by the bingo wheel; not only that which would happen now that he was at last before it, but all that had gone before, since his birth, and his mother's birth, and the birth of his father.(p. 408)

The protagonist realizes that he has always been playing the "game of life," as had his mother and father before him, and the odds of winning are always very bad. Ironically, at the end of the story, the wheel lands on the winning number, but again, as always, he loses.

In all three stories, at least one character is definitely victimized -- if not by one person, as in "The Blue Hotel," then by many, as in "The Lottery" and "King of the Bingo Game." In the first two stories, the protagonist was directly responsible for his or her own downfall. In the last story, this is not the case. Each story exhibits the results of collaboration or victimization -- or both.

Citations are found in James H. Pickering and Jeffrey D. Hoeper's *Literature* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1982).



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## SHAPES TO FILL A LACK

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# NOT JUST ANOTHER ORDINARY LOVE STORY

*Anna Crowe Dewart*

So, he was dead. He'd done it: drunk and smoked himself into the Elysian Fields. I hoped he was happy; I wasn't. I felt cheated. I'd waited for years, hoping to catch up with him again and share all that had happened in the twenty-five years since he had been my mentor. There have been others: many, especially if one considers humanity as a whole; very few that have been truly unique. Henry Lindstrom had been both unique and the first.

It was his car that was the first sign I noticed of his presence. I'd never seen anything like it. It was tiny, a dull olive-drab color, and a peculiar shape. I peered down into it and couldn't believe my eyes -- it was strewn with crumpled Lucky Strike packages -- did anyone smoke *that* much? I walked all around it, wondering who in the world it could belong to, then rushed off to class and forgot all about it.

Later in the year I passed him in the hall. Our eyes met. He gave me a big wink like some senior devil might to his apprentice. I was appalled. "Who is that man," I asked, turning to my friend. "I mean, I know he's a teacher and all that, but . . .?" She replied, "Oh, that's Mr. Lindstrom. He's new this year; teaches Senior English Honors -- weird." The rest of that year I would look for him in the halls, then do my best to ignore him if I saw him.

One day after school, toward the end of the school year, I was going to meet my mother. There he was, loping in his slouching manner right down the hall toward me. I panicked. This was ridiculous. I didn't even know the man. But when out of my terror I heard him stop and ask me who I was, what grade I was in, I found myself quite calmly looking straight into his blue eyes and saying, "I'm Mrs. Young's daughter, Molly. I'm a sophomore but hope to skip next year. I only have two junior credits to take and can do them over the summer by correspondence from the University." Smiling, eyes friendly, but deadly serious, he said, "I'm Mr. Lindstrom, teach Senior English. Maybe I'll see you next year." He turned abruptly and strode off down the hall.

I couldn't wait for school to start the next fall. I had made English Honors. Not only that, I was in his class. Then, there I was, sitting, trying to make small talk with my friends, rapping my pencil on the desk. Where was he?

He entered the room with no salutation, in mid-sentence, his compelling, nicotine ridden actor's voice in staccatto -- ". . . and I don't care, don't want mentioned within this room, will not discuss with any one of you, what a noun, verb, subject, pronoun, dangling participle, prepositional phrase, ad-nauseum, is, or how they are used. If you didn't know English grammar you wouldn't be here; if you think you've forgotten during the summer, you may be excused -- now. Please open your books to page 133. This is a poem by an anonymous, Sixteenth Century writer -- probably a soldier." I was spellbound; at last this intense curiosity was to find some sort of gratification.

I couldn't work hard enough, couldn't wait to get to class, couldn't wait to get my papers back. It was a sweet hurting anxiety of creative effort, again and again. He chided, he paced back and forth across the classroom; he revealed it all. He knew the origin and background of the words; their change in usage, how, when, why they had become accepted or used pejoratively. That was what the energy was about -- the sharing of knowledge, stretching, growing!

Yes, I'd grown fond of that fine dark hair, could hardly bear the intensity of his eyes. When he didn't wear his usual uniform of grey slacks, white shirt and soft, worn, burgundy corduroy jacket -- its sleeves, of necessity, patched at the elbows -- I was crushed. And how he got away with it in a predominately Mormon school, I'll never know -- but there, always rounding a hip pocket of his trousers, was his wine flask (endearing, daring gesture.)

I was in love, I admit it, but it wasn't the man by himself. It was the towering presence of knowledge carried in such a strong but slight man who stood just taller than myself. It was his manner of pouring it all out as if we might all die at any moment -- all the words with their reflective beauty and capacity for "telling" lost, with no ears to hear, no hearts to interpret.

It was also a life-style. One day when I didn't have my car, I asked for a ride into town. He invited me into his house to meet his wife and young son. I accepted with fear and elation. He called, as we walked in the door, "Lucy, Beasley, I've brought someone to meet you." The arome of baking bread permeated the spotless, Spartan, book-lined living room. A huge desk, pressed up against a window, carried small stacks of more books, papers, a lamp with its shade covered with jotted notes pinned to it, an ashtray with cigarette ends spilling out over its sides; it gave a contrasting impressions of being respectfully and lovingly untouched when the rest of the room was cleaned.

He led me on into the kitchen and there, bent over, taking fresh homemade crescent rolls from the over, was his wife. When she stood up and turned toward us I was struck by the simplicity of her un-made-up beauty, young, bright in her slight, refined form. "Lucy -- Molly, Molly -- Lucy," he introduced us. Gesturing toward a sturdy, shining baby boy playing on the clean linoleum floor, "Beasley Bones, euphonism for Beastly Bones -- he was huge and hard for her to have."

In the corner of the kitchen was a wooden booth, built cafe-style into a nook, with a huge jug of red wine sitting on the floor beneath one seat. "Have a seat. Would you like a glass of wine?" Then he corrected himself saying, "Ah, no, not 'til you've graduated, my young friend," and laughing to Lucy, continued, "I've robbed one cradle already, no need to corrupt another." The newness of it all; a whole new atmosphere -- travel posters and favorite pictures tacked to the wall, potted plants flowering in the window, books everywhere, classical music playing -- I had come home.

I rode home with him many times that year; soaking it all in, learning about the "Northeast," Dartmouth, where he had taught and courted Lucy, -- stories of his trudging across the snow-laden campus to her apartment to lie before a fire and listen to Gregorian Chants. He had studied in England. He had acted off Broadway. He knew Susan Strasbourg. It was overwhelming and something in me was starved. I couldn't get enough. Like some kind of echo of Socrates, he made me a disciple, an apprentice in living, a conspirator in learning.



When summer came I would spend whole days with them, but treasured most are the evenings on the screened-in porch, finally drinking my first glasses of wine, occasionally daring to smoke a cigarette. Our only light was a flickering candle stuck in a favorite wine bottle. I listened to him talk of things to come in my life as if he were telling me into being. He was relentless in his demands to make me think, seek the right questions, express my own impressions, ideas, opinions, and build my own sense of values.

One evening, just a week before I was to leave for college, he walked me to my car. He ushered me in and after he had very carefully shut the door, he bent over, reached in and cradled the back of my head firmly and gently in his hand -- as we looked into one another we became one being. He didn't kiss me; it was the only time we ever touched. It was as if that exquisite burning desire -- in him, to teach, in me, to learn -- was held there in a moment completely outside time to exist forever.

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## OCCIDENTAL ORIENTAL

*Have you had your fill of rice today?  
How many mouths must you feed?  
First born daughter child  
Just practice for first child  
Ancient Ancestral altar made  
Red with neon light  
Where the spirits of my spirits  
Rest away from the color T.V.  
Grandmother quick come out from  
Rice fields I want a computer  
You speak English--everyone knows  
English is the yellow brick road to...is Oz in Asia?  
Don't chew too many beetle nuts  
They stain your teeth  
American candy is too sweet  
No, I don't believe in your Jesus  
Buddah is much wiser  
It's never mind - tigers, tigers, horses, horses  
We all spring from the middle kingdom  
Japan has a Magic Kingdom.*

V. Seeger

# EMPTY SPACES

*Flo Powell*

Mr. Smith was a big man in his early sixties. He was over six feet tall and weighed two hundred and twenty pounds. His pleasant, even features were accented by smile wrinkles around his eyes and mouth. He would lie on his side, propped on one elbow, his head supported by a massive hand. Jet black hair, speckled only slightly with gray, covered his head. Horn-rimmed glasses framed benevolent dark brown eyes that were full of humor.

He spoke with a fine resonant voice that was often broken with rich laughter at his own jokes. As I tended to my nurse's aide duties in his hospital room, he told me he had been a railroad man for thirty years. We talked of families, gardens, and travel.

His wife and at least one of his four children were with him constantly. More ailing patriarch now than husband and father, he displayed a quiet strength that made him a precious part of their lives. They attended his needs, giving all they could, nurturing him as he had nurtured them.

Mr. Smith had been a diabetic for many years. He had been admitted for treatment when his diabetes had become uncontrollable. Weakened by this, he found it difficult to breathe when he exerted himself. Despite his weakness, his family was optimistic. Tests would be done, the diabetes curtailed, and all would be well. I left the floor a few days after meeting him with the same optimism, convinced that Mr. Smith and I would never meet again.

Two months later, I assumed a permanent position on the oncology floor of St. Joseph's Hospital. It was a difficult adjustment. Cancer encompasses the entire spectrum of human physiology and, as a nursing student, I became involved intellectually. While I was impressed with my ability to apply my newly learned knowledge of anatomy, I was shocked by the impotence of the medical profession in its fight against cancer.

This was a hectic floor as nurses and aides raced to "maintain" their patients. Few are cured. Machines fill the hospital rooms. Infusion pumps click rhythmically as they measure out liquid nourishment in one room and toxic chemotherapeutic drugs in another. Their alarms go off every ten of fifteen minutes, beckoning a nurse to read the computerized messages that flash across the screens in yellow, blue or red. Respiratory therapists haul in breathing equipment in an effort to clear congested lungs. Oxygen bubbles through plastic bottles of water at the head of every bed. Tubes fill natural and unnatural orifices perpetually draining and filling, draining and filling.

It is a battlefield with few survivors. While the silent parasite ravages its victim, those who wait also suffer. The battle may be long or short, but the odds are set and the nurse knows from the first skirmish who the victor will probably be.

The hall is hushed when a patient is dying. The idle chatter in the nurse's station and lounge stops. Only the slight squeak of rubber soles on

the linoleum tiles breaks the quiet. It would seem that the very air is suspended as if any movement would disturb the vacillating life that is being drawn towards death. Often two or three die within hours of each other. Time becomes a border around a great empty space.

In September of that year Mr. Smith became my patient again. It had been five months since I had seen him. His diagnosis was lung cancer.

Mr. Smith was in the terminal stages of his disease. The man who greeted me now had undergone a terrible metamorphosis. Deep creases had replaced the smile lines around his eyes and mouth. His features were sunken; his face had thinned. His tanned skin had taken on a yellow pallor; the sad, painful figure, still on one side, struggled for breath. Gone was his fine, resonant voice; he could barely speak above a whisper.

While I cared for him I would take his hand and lean down close to his face to hear what he was saying. He would rasp out some well-chosen comment or request. Eventually even this became too much of an effort and he was silent. He was totally dependent on us to anticipate his every need.

Once again his family gathered at his bedside. They slept in chairs or on the floor beside him and at least one of them was always with him. They feared the loss of him and physically and emotionally clung to him as if this could prevent his ultimate departure. I had a great affection for this gentle and once strong man; it saddened me to see this change in him.

There was very little any of us could do for Mr. Smith. He was given intravenous fluids in an attempt to stabilize his electrolyte and fluid balance, his pain medication was adjusted, and he was discharged after about three weeks. I felt that this would be our last meeting. But just before Thanksgiving, he returned. The final struggle had begun. Now Mr. Smith's silence was broken only by the bubbling "death rattles" that emphasized his every breath. His eyes were wide with terror. He was drowning in his own fluids.

Days went by and Mr. Smith succumbed and waited. We all waited. The day before Thanksgiving, the rales stopped and his respiration became slow, shallow and quiet, with intermittent periods of apnea. The hand I held now was cold, damp and flaccid. His eyes showed no pain, no more terror. He was ready.

Early one afternoon his son came to the nurse's station. "My father is damp. I'd like for someone to change his bed and gown," he said.

The charge nurse moved close to him. "Is he very uncomfortable?" she asked. "I'd rather not move him any more than we have to."

"He's wet," the son answered. "I don't want him to be cold." He left the station.

The charge nurse looked at me. "Make the family leave the room when you change him," she said.

I called for the male attendant. The orderly that night was a rough man, outwardly devoid of compassion. His total dislike of his work and the resentment he felt towards this obligation were directed towards his patients and workmates equally. But I would need his strength to change Mr. Smith.

When the orderly arrived I gathered clean sheets and a clean gown and we walked to the room together. We rolled Mr. Smith onto his right side as I stripped off the old sheets and replaced them with clean ones. He was swollen with fluids that his body could not release, and he had little strength



to maneuver his large cumbersome limbs. We had watched as one body system after another had shut down. Only his skin worked now and in an effort to compensate it poured out liters of cold perspiration. The bedclothes would not be dry for long.

When I had tucked in the new sheets, we turned Mr. Smith onto his left side towards me and the orderly pulled the sheets from underneath him. His gaze settled on my face. His eyes were fixed, all emotion, all evidence of his pain, gone from them. Suddenly, his respirations slowed and stopped.

"Please, Mr. Smith," I prayed, "please don't go on me now!" I looked at my watch, counting, five seconds, ten seconds. "Wait!" I shouted to the orderly.

The orderly stopped and looked up from his work. Mr. Smith's breathing began again, almost as if I had called him back. The orderly continued. Minutes passed and again Mr. Smith's breathing stopped.

"Mr. Smith!" I called. Another fifteen seconds had passed. He sighed and began to breathe. Wearily, he looked up at me. I longed for the orderly to finish with the mounds of pads and drawsheets.

When Mr. Smith's respirations stopped for the third time my panic became even more desperate. "Stop!" I yelled. "Forget about finishing, let's get his head up!" We moved Mr. Smith onto his back and put his head up on pillows and his breathing returned. I straightened the bottom sheets.

"You can leave now," I told the orderly. "I'll finish him." Relieved, the orderly left the room. I changed the soaked gown and topsheets alone. The room was silent except for the quiet struggling sounds of Mr. Smith's breathing and the weak bubbling of the oxygen above his head. I hung on each breath as I finished the bed.

When everything was in place, I took his hand. "Mr. Smith," I asked, "are you comfortable now?" The words were empty and stupid and I realized that as soon as I blurted them. They served to emphasize how truly helpless we both were.

The fragility of life, all life, my life, was so cruelly obvious at that moment. The air was heavy and oppressive with the reality of death and the impermanence of every object in that room, and even the room itself.

I left the room and turned down the empty hall towards the nurse's station. I felt relief that I would not be present when Mr. Smith's time came. Halfway down the hall I turned and impulsively returned to his room. I stood at the door looking in at him and, without touching him, I knew that he was dead.

I shut the door and walked over to the bed. His eyes were closed. It almost seemed that he had waited to die privately. I took his hand in mine; there was no more muscle tonicity, and his hand was stiff yet yielding. The large hands were gray, the nailbeds blue. I felt for a pulse first in his wrist and then with my stethoscope just under his heart. There was no pulse nor were there breath sounds. I rang the buzzer for the nurse.

"May I help you?" came the voice through the intercom.

"Send a nurse down here, please," I answered.

The charge nurse appeared immediately and we examined the body together. She turned down the I.V. to a slow four or five drips a minute and she left to tell the family who had been waiting in the visitors' area.

Mr. Smith's family fathered outside his room. They sobbed quietly as the charge nurse spoke to them. Their grief was quiet, personal. I watched



them from the nurse's station. All four children had their father's dark hair and olive skin. Their faces, though distorted by sadness, retained their inherent dignity. I felt a rush of emotion as I looked at their dark sensitive eyes, their father's eyes. Now I turned away feeling unable to control my own emotion.

Some minutes later the eldest daughter came to the door of the station. She told the nurse of the arrangements that had been made for Mr. Smith's body. Then she turned to me. "Please tell me," she said, her voice shaking, "was the end? Was it . . .?"

"Easy?" I asked gently. She nodded. "Yes," I said, "it was very easy. He just stopped breathing."

"I had to ask," she sobbed. "I needed to know."

I went into the nurse's lounge. I felt a huge responsibility for Mr. Smith's death. Precious moments had been taken from him by moving him. It was a burden that I couldn't remove with logic. Another nurse joined me. "Mr. Smith's gone?" she asked.

"Yes," I answered. "I guess changing him was more than he could bear. I wish we hadn't done it."

"It's the chance you take," she said. "Every time we give the large doses of medications the doctors order for all these patients with failing lungs, we wait. The end comes when it comes. What you do means very little. You will work hardest at protecting yourself."

In the year since Mr. Smith's death, I have cared for many patients. During their months of chemotherapy we have exchanged small portions of our lives and become friends. When they die I am mercifully occupied with the work that is left to be done.

Each death brings to my quieter moments a feeling of personal loss. Another life existed and is no more. What I have learned to accept is that there is for me no coming to terms with the death of an individual. Nursing is an occupation of giving and caring tempered with the knowledge that in our mutual struggle for life and health we are as vulnerable as those for whom we struggle.



# “FERN HILL”

*Brian Poythress*

Dylan Thomas' "Fern Hill" is a soliloquy, rich in imagery, in which lost innocence is recalled. Thomas makes much use of alliteration in his metaphors throughout the work, pairing green with golden, simple with stars, and white with wanderer. He repeats the duo of green and grass to achieve different effects. The narrator's childhood was carefree and happy; he was immortal in his innocence. The world he lived in was beautiful, verdant - a safe and simple place. It was his world, his possession. He was lord of all he surveyed, and all things danced to his tune. His childhood memories remain, made perhaps more poignant by his awareness of his own mortality and insignificance.

The child's attitude toward his world was an egocentric one. The world was *his*; he was "prince of the apple towns," "hunter and herdsman"; he was "famous among the barns." His pastoral surroundings provided him with material for heroic fantasies, and for him the roles he played were real.

The farm (the world) existed for him and because he existed. Each night, "As I rode to sleep," the farm vanished. With his awakening "the farm, like a wanderer white with the dew, come back" was recreated for him. Where the farm had gone during the night was not important; that it was reborn for him anew and anon was sufficient.

The simplicity of the child's perceptions, his unquestioning acceptance of what his senses told him, is evident in "the nightjars, flying with the ricks," and in "the whinnying green stable." Stables and ricks, of inanimate wood, of course neither speak nor fly. But the child heard the sounds, and for him, ricks could take wing, and barns neigh.

His simple world was a safe one as well. Each night as he "rode to sleep" with owls "bearing the farm away," he slept secure in the aegis of innocence. [The owl is the symbol of Pallas Athena, the protector.]

The illustrations of the child's viewpoint continue. He saw "Fields as high as the house," the golden grain of the fields towering over him as did the imposing bulk of the house. He perceived each clearly, each bigger than he, but saw no need to differentiate between the two. This is the altered perception of the small child, as opposed to the personifications of the stable and the ricks.

Green appears as a metaphor again and again in "Fern Hill." It is used to represent youth, inexperience, and innocence. The narrator was "green and carefree," "young and easy," and happy, as "happy as the grass was green."

Thomas also uses green in a denotative sense. There is the green of "the apple boughs," the verdure of "daisies and barley," and again the grass around the house. These greens of springtime and summer are, as are innocence and youth, ephemeral. The short-lived green of youth is also referred to in the last lines of the poem, where the narrator tells us that "Time held me green and dying."

The man the narrator has become expounds, in his ruminations on his youth, on the wonder of creation and celebrates life. The light in the line "Down the rivers of the windfall light" can be seen as the light of creation. Another reference to light appears in the lines dealing with the farm's return, "Shining, it was Adam and maiden." The image recurs in "And the sun grew round that very day."

All the elements of Genesis are present in the seventh and eighth stanzas. The sun is followed by "the sky gathered again," then Adam and Eve appear. The Biblical sequence is followed as sun, sky, and life appear. As in the beginning legend, order comes from chaos, with "the birth of the simple light/ In the first, spinning place." God created first the beasts, Genesis tells us, then man. The "spellbound horses walking warm" might be seen as the first animals, and "the fields of praise" could easily be taken as the Garden of Eden.

Lines seventeen through twenty-two present a celebration of the elements.

"And the sabbath rang slowly  
In the pebbles of the holy streams.  
All the sun long it was running, it was lovely, the hay.  
Fields as high as the house, the tunes from the chimneys  
it was air  
And playing, lovely and watery,  
And fire green as grass."

The elements are intermingled, fire moving as might air move, and described as "watery." The elements are life, the world all of a piece, viewed as an harmonious whole. The "it" in "it was running" can be seen as life itself.

The child that the narrator brings back in his reverie saw each day as a new creation, another sabbath. The child, in his innocence, was like Adam and Eve, the "Adam and maiden" of line thirty. He was without sin, and immortal. As they fell literally from Grace, so did the child fall, each paying the penalty for knowledge. The child is all of us, one of the "children green and golden" who "Follow him out of grace." The "him" that the children follow is time.

Thomas personifies time, naming him five times. He is alternately kind and indulgent, remorseless and cruel. "Time let me hail and climb," "Time let me play and be golden." Time allowed the child to be a child, let him enjoy youth as he "ran my heedless ways." Time could afford to indulge him, because time would win.

The references to time prepare the reader for the final lines and the last personification in the poem. Time had let him play "In the sun that is young once only," and the child did not care that "time would take me." The reference to the "children green and golden" indicates a recognition that we are all subject to time, that we are all mortal, all insignificant. We must all one day "wake to the farm forever fled from the childless land."

The last two lines of "Fern Hill" form a conclusion. "Time held me green and dying/ Though I sang in my chains like the sea." reveals the narrator's realization that life and death are inseparable. As the sea is held in



chains by the land, both its opposite and compliment, so is life by death enchained. Each gives meaning and definition to the other, as do light and dark.

If there is a message to be gleaned from this work, it is not only that none of us will get out of it (life) alive, but that life is all we have. We should live it to the fullest while we can.

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## A FISH STORY

*Margaret Brockland*

While many people fish for food, a great number of us, sport fishermen, trophy-hunters, and Saturday trollers, do so simply for entertainment. Because most of us are gentle, harmless creatures, I can only conclude that if people realized the cruelty of sport fishing, then they would refrain from practising it. In an effort to increase the awareness of such people, I ask you to put yourself in the fish's place. Imagine that you are a hungry young trout, gliding silently through the cool waters of a salty Georgia creek. You notice a faint, white blur drifting a short distance ahead of you--a meal-sized shrimp. Eager and unsuspecting, you grab it, planning to swallow the creature in a gulp before it realizes what has happened, when suddenly you feel an excruciating pain in your mouth and you find that you cannot swallow your would-be breakfast. Fighting for all you are worth, you are nevertheless pulled toward the surface of the waters, toward that awful void in which the murderously hot, heavy winds blow. The roof of your mouth is torn and bleeding, but you still cannot free yourself. At the surface you are hauled into the bright light, driven into frenzy when you leave the buoyancy of the water and your resulting weight increase redoubles the pain in your mouth and echoes it with an ache in your besmothered gills. A dry, rough blanket wraps around you and you are lifted and turned over a few times, and then the barb is twisted and snatched from your face. You fall into the cold water again, feeling the salt that ruthlessly bites at your wound. As the subsequent days pass you cannot eat with your mangled mouth and a white, prickly infection spreads across your sides in the places where that dry roughness touched your scales. Whether or not you heal and live to chance another such experience, your tiny body struggles to recover and your mind can only wonder, "Why?"



*Roses blooming silently in effortless array,  
Sunlight trying desperately to penetrate the day,  
Wall-to-wall sensations echo through my mind  
As a girl who never knew you throws tears into the wind.*

*Listening to the crashing blows of treacherous pretenses,  
Hard, hungry syllables that beat against my senses,  
Feeling pain despite the sway of pointless alcohol,  
Apathetic clothing starts its long, revealing, fall.*

*Tranquil, lovely face that I will evermore adore,  
Beauty bathed in blackness as the earth resumes its door,  
But Spirit! -- Spirit, run fast, run free!  
And as I offer you my hand, please pause to wait for me.*

Lynn Nerrin

# THE STORY BOX

*Vicki Hill*

The shadowy green woods rustled complacently, settling in for another humid night. The sharp staccato shriek of a jay and the solemn woodwind tones of a whip-poor-will competed for dominance of the oppressive late-afternoon silence, but did nothing to disturb the molasses-like malaise that hung heavy in the air like a coming storm. Encroaching pines stood like grave sentinels over a tiny wooden shack set between the vaguely menacing woods and a narrow dirt road. Muscular vines of wisteria embraced the shack's rusted tin roof, threatening to crush what already sagged beneath the weight of time.

On the rude wooden porch a one-eyed yellow Tom-cat lay somnolently watchful, only the occasional flick of its ears betraying it as alive. Nearby an old woman sat creaking in a rocking chair and lackadaisically fanning herself with a cardboard fan showing a blurred, four-color picture of Jesus on one side and an advertisement for a funeral home on the other. As she rocked, she contemplated with affectionate sternness the little girl who sat on the steps before her dangling her bare feet in the red Georgia earth. The girl, round eyes glowing with anticipation as she quietly awaited the story she knew was to come, clung with sweaty hands to the rough wooden box in her lap. Beneath the porch, a rasping rainfrog began to chant his rhythmic prophecy.

Without warning, the old woman cleared her throat noisily and spat over the edge of the porch. The cat started up in alarm, then settled back down reluctantly, after shooting the woman an accusing look with its one good eye.

"Give me the story-box, girl," the old woman said, reaching out her gnarled hands. "I'll see what I can find to tell you about today."

The girl watched intently as the woman's crooked fingers clumsily worked the latch, opened the box, and slowly sifted through the articles contained in it, her face contorting in vivid remembrance. The girl saw and recognized several things from earlier tales: a crumbling yellow newspaper clipping, a creased, sepia-toned photograph of a young man, a bit of stained lace, a strand of green glass beads. Each of these items recalled to her mind one of her grandmother's colorful stories of the past with the quick-shifting intensity of a slide projection.

The woman's hand emerged from the box finally, holding a tiny brown package tied up with a bit of string.

"I reckon today I'll tell you about the time me and my daddy watched the hanging. I don't reckon you'll understand all of it, but there's a lesson to it, so you listen good, you hear?"

At the girl's eager nod, the old woman frowned, then began.

"Well, it was like this. Me and my daddy were going to town one morning. It was nearly five miles, and we had to walk the whole way. I must have been about your age; you're ten, ain't that right? Yes." She paused, a look of intense reflection on her face.

"Well, anyway, we were walking down the road when all of a sudden we saw this crowd of people coming round the bend towards us. Must have been twenty or thirty of them, hollering and shouting and stirring up a great cloud of dust so you could see and hear them way off. Some of the women were crying, and a bunch of scrawny, shirt-tail younguns were running along beside, picking up rocks and slinging them into the midst of the crowd, laughing and carrying on like they was on a holiday. The whole crowd was too far away for us to see what all the excitement was about, but daddy says to me, he says, 'You stick close to me, now. We're gonna see what this ruckus is all about.' "

Her mouth twitched into a half-smile at the remembrance of her long-dead father's words; the girl sat motionless, patient.

"When we got up close enough to be heard, my daddy halloed to the men and asked them what had happened.

" 'We done caught us a nigger,' a man wearing dirty overalls and a greasy hat told us. 'He's the one what they say raped the Watson girl.' "

" 'Yeah,' another said. 'And we aim to make him pay, and pay good.' "

She stopped, fingering her chin ruminatively.

"I knew about the Watson girl. She was older than me, but I had seen her around, at church mostly. She was a real pretty girl, as I remember. At least, she was before the trouble. Seems they'd found her in the woods, her dress all torn, and she'd told them what had happened. That had been two or three days before, and some of the neighbor men had been laying for that nigger all the time since, waiting to catch him. I was too young then to know what it was all about exactly, but I knew from the way folks was acting that it was pretty serious business. Yessir, serious business. She never was quite right after that."

With unexpected violence, the old woman sprang forward from her chair and swatted an insect with her fan. "Darn yellow-fly's been biting me all afternoon," she explained, settling back down. The girl reached out and absently thumped the squashed fly off the edge of the porch, a preoccupied look on her face.

"Anyway, as we were standing there talking, one of the women in the crowd started to wail and cry out, and we looked over at her.

" 'That there's poor old Mrs. Watson, the girl's ma,' the first man told us. 'She's come along to watch us hang this black bastard. Says she won't sleep again till she sees him swing. Can't say as I blame her.' " The old woman nodded, crafty and knowing.

"Daddy pushed through the crowd a ways, dragging me along, so we could get a look at the man they had caught. We had to fight it pretty rough to get through that mob, but then suddenly we were before him. I remember it so good, just like yesterday. There he stood: big and black and scary-looking, his hands tied behind his back and his feet looped together with somebody's belt. Two men were holding their rifles to him, and the little boys were pelting him with rocks and sticks from all sides. But that nigger never moved a muscle, just stood there looking straight ahead, proud as a king." She paused pensively, her eyes doubtful, then resolvedly continued.

"I remember wondering how they found out he was the man; I guess



they knew what they were doing. I tried to ask daddy, but he just shook his head at me, like he was angry. I told him I felt sorry for the man, even if he was black.

" 'You ought not feel any more sorry for him than for a mad dog,' he told me. 'He's a vicious cur, and he has to be put down, for the sake of all of us.' "

" 'It's God's will!' a wild-eyed young man in the crowd shouted. I recognized him to be the Reverend Taylor's boy. There were a few murmurs of 'Amen,' and the rest of the people just nodded their heads in agreement.

"I looked up into that colored's face and I knew right then that they were right. He was scowling at me so mean and fierce, I felt all my pity for him dry up inside me. I was so scared, I almost wanted to run off into the woods to get away from him, even if he was tied up. I didn't no more understand what 'rape' meant than you do, but I sure had sense enough to know it couldn't be good. Yessir, I remember it like yesterday. I tell you, I was scared." She looked at the girl with sidelong intensity, as if trying to judge her reaction.

The yellow Tom-cat stirred lazily, snapping diffidently at a fly buzzing around its ears, then resumed its sphinx-like posture.

The little girl sat frowning, unable to comprehend her grandmother's words. As she dug her toes into the soft clay, her grandmother's words dug into the fertile soil of her young imagination, spoiling her usually sunny child's face with a dark and troubled shadow of age. Her thoughts were interrupted as the old woman resumed her tale.

"We followed along with the crowd till we came to the spot picked out for the hanging. By then there must have been fifty or sixty people with us, and more coming all the time. Somebody had brought a noose-rope, and they slung it over the limb of a big china-berry tree beside the road. I remember it was a china-berry tree because I was barefoot, and the dry berries hurt my feet. Somebody else had an old apple-crate, so they stood it on end and put the colored man, still tied up, on top of it and dropped the noose over his head. He didn't move or say a word, just stood there on that crate looking at the ground and scowling meaner than ever. The man in the hat asked him did he have any last words to say before he was hung. He still didn't say nothing, just lifted up his head to look at us all. His chest was heaving like he was winded, but his proud black face didn't show anything as he calmly spat at the man in the hat. Then one of the women screamed and the next thing we knew the Taylor boy had done run up and kicked that crate right out from under him."

The girl's eyes clouded; her grandmother cleared her throat and went on.

"He never made a sound, except a little gurgling noise. I heard his neck snap, and everybody cheered, and then he was just hanging there, swaying a little, his eyes and tongue bulging out and the flies lighting on him. A dog started to growl and snap at his feet swinging there. The man in the hat kicked him, and he went away whining.

"Just then one of the boys ran up and, with a wild yell, started to chop off one of the dead nigger's fingers with his pocket-knife. It didn't come off easy, but that boy was determined, and managed to take it off at the second joint. He said he was keeping it for a trophy, and started running around showing it to people and scaring the girls. I'll never forget the look



on that boy's face: all proud and manly-like. It's a good thing for a boy to see justice at work first hand like that. Keeps him from getting any funny notions. Anyway, he must have given all of them an idea, cause then all the men started in to cutting parts off that body for momentos. By time my daddy got close enough, there wasn't much left except a couple of toes, but he got one for me anyway, and I kept it safe all these years." The old woman ceased her speech with a final, judgemental nod, a hideous yellow grin splitting her weathered face obscenely.

With sick mesmerization, the little girl watched her grandmother slowly unwinding the brown paper package. The old woman held out a two-inch stump of petrified black flesh, her eyes glowing with pride. The girl took it and swung it gently back and forth on the bit of cotton string tied around it, torn between horror and fascination. Tears filled her eyes; tears of shame, of mourning barely comprehended for ideals lost before fully formed. The roar of the past in her ears drowned out her grandmother's voice as in the distance a clap of thunder sounded an answering reverberation.

The cat stretched languidly on the rough boards, jumped indifferently to the ground, and stalked away on sleep- and age-stiffened legs, throwing a glance of contemptuous deprecation over his shoulder at the grotesque tableau. As he disappeared from view, a gentle rain began to fall, washing the dust of the past and the tears of the future together into the river of life.



*"My heart is in the coffin there with Caesar,  
And I must pause till it come back to me."*

*Your eyes,  
Yet not your eyes  
Look out at me  
From a face  
That is almost yours.  
Could she give them the life  
The wide-eyed devoted attention  
The facsimile of captivated fascination--  
If those eyes could illuminate the world  
And even I  
Perhaps, for a moment, she could bring you  
to me,  
Although I know she cannot.*

*Your hair  
Bounces, turns upon her head  
--Identical in hue--  
Distinguishing you from all others  
Proclaiming uniqueness in mind and spirit  
By the outward physical display.*

*But though I remain obsessed with the memory  
of your surface features,  
The incomplete person within you plagues  
me most.  
Those feelings which sought refuge in concealment  
--The awareness which desperately sought  
alleviation through repression--  
The insecurities I touched...*

*The greatest of frustrations has stifled my  
desire.*

*Your life, and therefore your*

*Magic*

*Loneliness*

*Love*

*Anger*

*Beauty*

*Has been captured.*

*And to put my pain in stupid, trite phrases*

*Would lead me to say that*

*Night has descended upon the sun*

*And it will never rise again.*

*To hope for comfort in empty promises of heaven  
is absurd.*

*You had found heaven here--*

*A better place...*

*You*

*Gave.*

*You took--*

*More.*

*And lastly, mostly,*

*You took a portion of*

*Me*

*Into the earth with*

*You.*

Lynn Nerrin



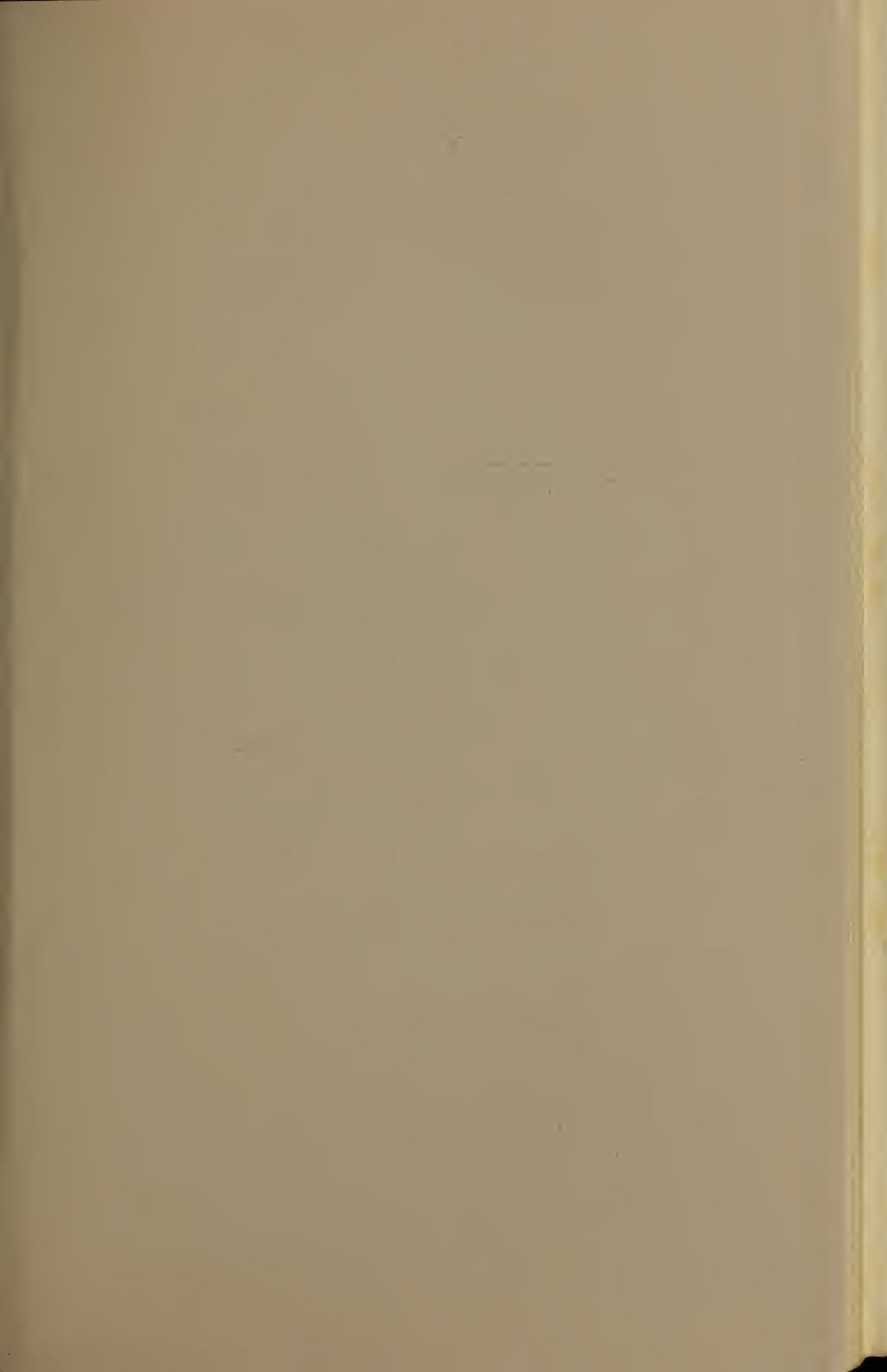


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If you are interested in working on the 1986 *Calliope* staff, or in submitting work for consideration in that edition, please contact Dr. Richard Raymond in the Department of Languages, Literature and Dramatic Arts, Lower Floor, Gamble Hall. *Calliope* welcomes prose, poetry, and nonfiction work in all fields, as well as photographs and sketches. All pieces submitted must be the work of students, staff, or faculty members of Armstrong State College. Work should be submitted by the end of Fall Quarter for best chance of publication.

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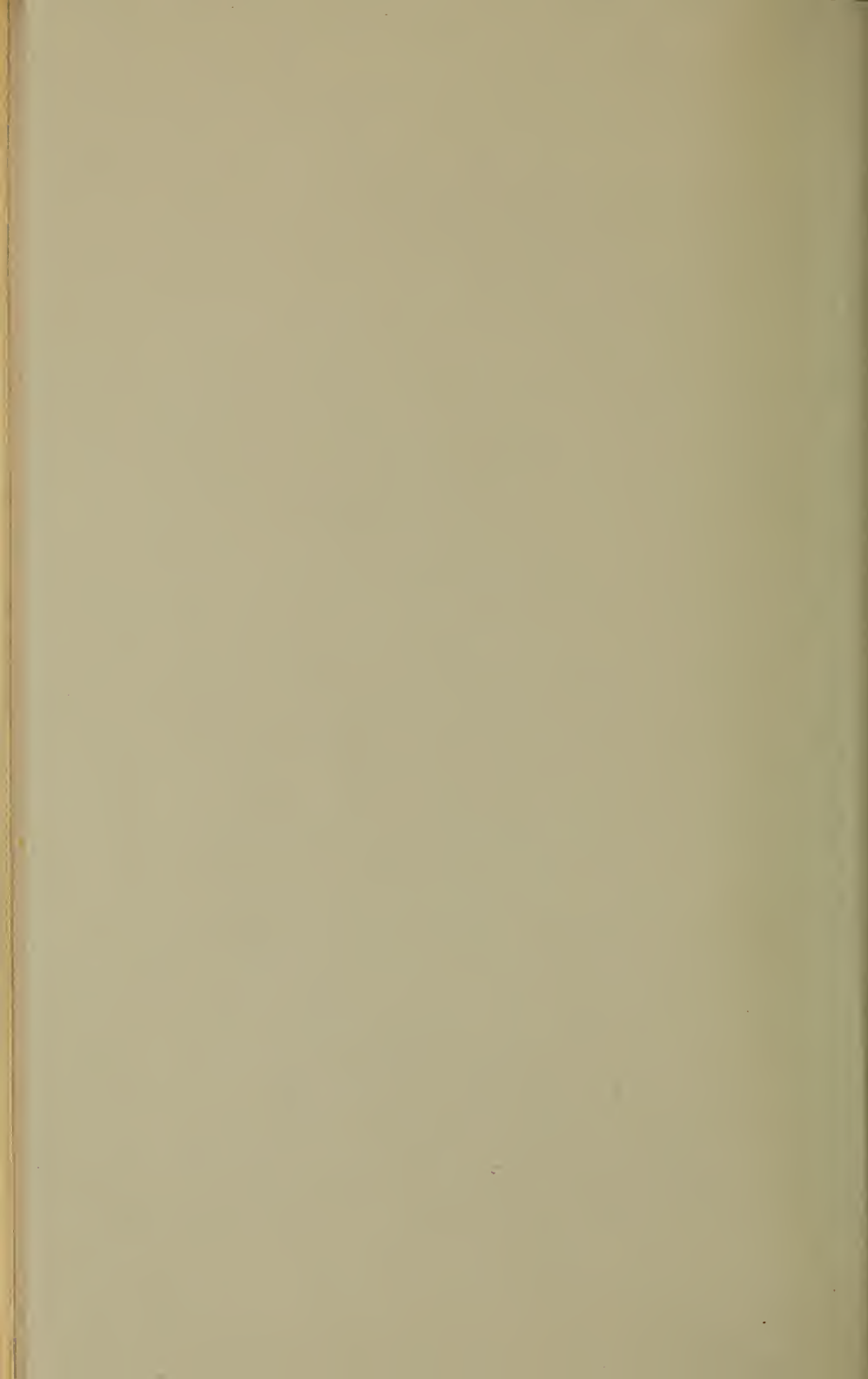


# Calliope



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# Calliope

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VOLUME TWO  
SPRING, 1986

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*Calliope*, 1986 was a pleasure to create. Numerous submissions, dedicated personnel and a multitude of student support made the task a simple one. Although at times we felt some despair, the ritual was well worth the time and effort.

Without the help of certain patient people this publication would have remained dormant. We would like to express our sincere appreciation to the following people: Dr. Richard Raymond, Faculty Advisor; Peter Clonts, Technical Advisor; Jeff Gulle, Artistic Advisor; and last, but never least, to all of the students and faculty who submitted to *Calliope*.

We regret not being able to publish all of the works we received. Due to limited spacing, however, certain works had to be omitted.

We would also like to express our gratitude to the Lillian and Frank W. Spencer Foundation. Their generous contribution made the award for the best fiction or poetic submission possible.

The construction of *Calliope* was truly a bountiful task. Due to the quality of last year's edition we were challenged to our maximum potential. We, the editors hope you enjoy *Calliope*. Our staff constructed the magazine—you were our inspiration.

Thank you for your support.

*Cover by Edward Jenkins*



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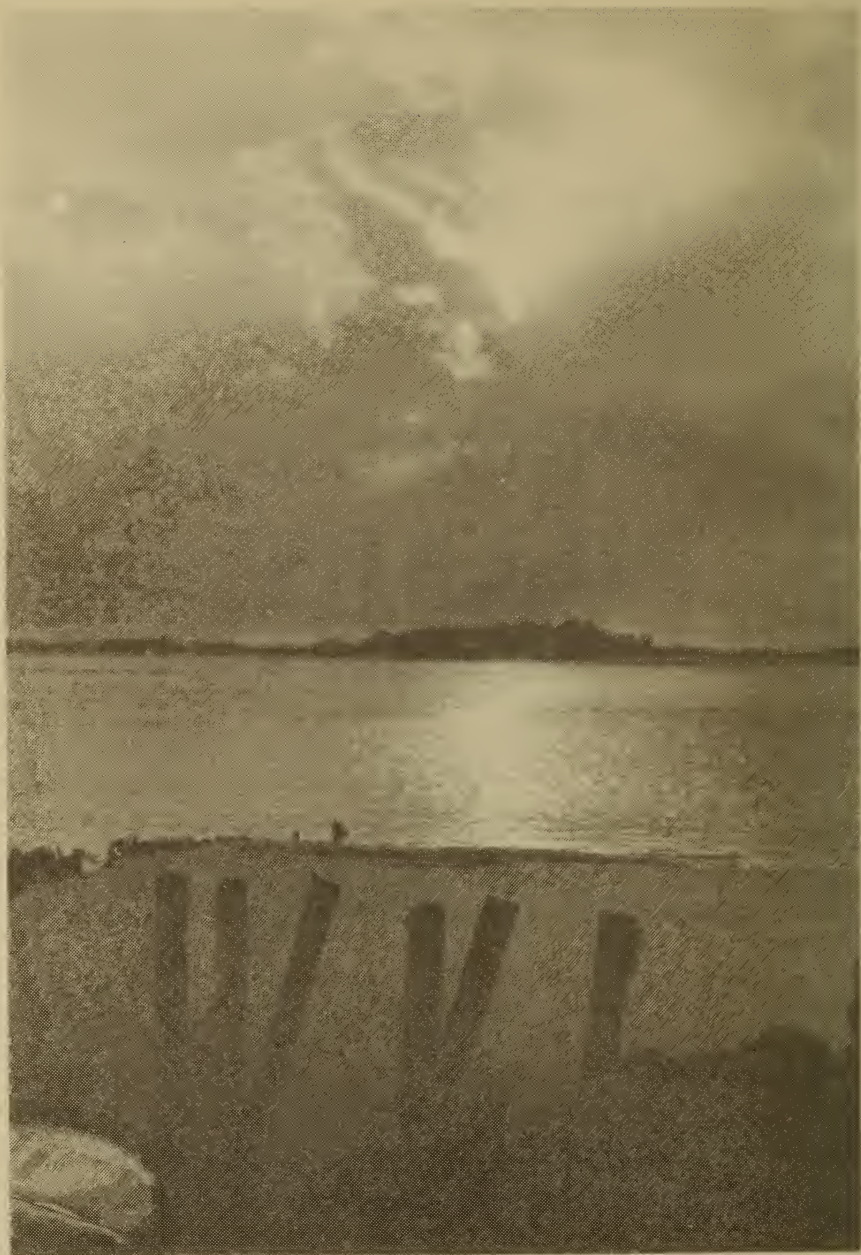
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“PROPS and  
PILLARS”:  
ESSAYS  
on  
LITERATURE

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*Photo by John Gulle*

The following is an essay written in response to a topic assigned in English 192. The paper is written under the pretense that it is 1970, and Ernest Hemingway's novel, *Islands in The Stream* has just recently been published. As an editorialist for "Time" magazine, I have chosen to review Hemingway's novel and discuss the paradox of this suicidal author, and the courageous character he created.

## DEALING WITH STRESS: A REVIEW of *ISLANDS IN THE STREAM*

When the "great storyteller" Ernest Hemingway died ten years ago, the world mourned his passing. No longer could an avid reader hope to lose himself in the action and splendor of a new Hemingway novel. He would have to be content with former masterpieces, such as *The Sun Also Rises* and *The Old Man and The Sea*. Although many great authors have died, none to date have been able to resurrect themselves. Ernest Hemingway, however, somehow managed this feat by giving his readers one, last, spectacular novel, ten years after his suicide.

Although Hemingway's new novel, *Islands In The Stream*, was not edited and revised by the author himself, there is still no doubt in this reader's mind that every sentence is undeniably Hemingway. Upon reading the novel, I discovered such emotion and action, that I could not pass up the opportunity to review the novel for *Time* subscribers.

In a society which is slowly turning to methods of lust to attract readers, Hemingway has provided a novel that dares to go against the normal trend. Hemingway accepted the idea that "it is (a) privilege to help man endure by lifting his heart," as William Faulkner said in *The Stockholm Address*, "by reminding him of the courage and honor and hope and pride and compassion and pity and sacrifice which have been the glory of his past." Hemingway's new novel encompasses all of these emotions and more. It is ironic that a man who committed suicide could create a novel with these traits, which are shown through one man, Thomas Hudson, who refuses to give in to despair.

The main character in *Islands in The Stream* is Thomas Hudson. He lives on an island, secluded from both his sons and a large portion of society. He is an artist, and throughout his entire life, he has hidden his emotions from those who love him by throwing himself into his work.



Hudson's life is filled with grief and despair, but he deals with this grief by using courage and strength. He is a man who possesses many of the qualities that his creator lacked. Hemingway obviously could not bear the pain and despair of life, although he fashioned a character who could endure anything.

Hudson's grief is constant throughout the novel, and there is even evidence of this in the very beginning of the story. A divorce is a tragic thing to go through, and Thomas Hudson has been through two. He realizes that "he..never cared, truly, about success. What he (cares) about (is) painting and his children and he (is) still in love with the first woman he had been in love with"(8). Therefore, much of Hudson's grief springs from his own loneliness and discontent. To cope with this loneliness, Hudson uses his work, art, to fill his days and nights. He paints the sea, because he has grown to love the violent "crashing of the surf" and the beauty of the water and sand(5). The sea brings him comfort, for he knows that most things are both violent and beautiful.

Interestingly, love is not Hudson's only cause of grief. Most of the pain is caused by the loss of his three sons, who were very special to their father. Hudson finds it difficult to express the way he feels, so he holds his pain inside and refuses to come to terms with himself. It would seem that with so much pain inside, Hudson would be forced to find yet another way to cope. He does indeed. What better way to forget life's problems than drowning them in a bottle of rum. Becoming intoxicated provides only a temporary relief for Thomas' grief, but "there are no terms to be made with sorrow...(time) is supposed to cure it,(but) if it is cured by anything less than death, the chances are that it was not true sorrow"(185).

It is evident that Hudson cannot rid himself of the pain that he carries inside. He tries various ways to ease his sorrow. Besides drinking and his art, Hudson, later in the novel, uses his military service as an aphrodisiac. He puts one hundred percent of himself into his pursuit of the Germans. He enjoys this because he is close to the sea, and he knows that a man must be a man and perform his duty. Hudson believes that he must "(get) it straight. Your son you lose. Love you lose. Honor has been gone for a long time. Duty you do"(307).

Although Thomas Hudson finds it hard to relate his emotions to others, he does, however, find no difficulty in sharing his true feelings with his cats. Hudson's motley harem of felines provides an excellent release for the man. To him, the cats agree that there are no answers to life's questions, "(there aren't) any solution(s)" (193). There can be no logical reason why a man should lose three sons in his lifetime. Therefore, Hudson does



not look for logical reasons; he looks for nothing at all.

There is a strong resemblance between the lives of Thomas Hudson and Ernest Hemingway. Both men were artists and both held the same ideas of courage and duty. It would seem, then, that somehow, like the character he created, Hemingway could have found some way to hold on to life. Hudson used his art, and it was not until "(he) looked up and (saw) the sky that he had always loved and he looked across the great lagoon that he was quite sure, now, he would never paint," that he realized he was going to die (435).

When his desire to paint died, so did he. Could it not be possible then that Hemingway, upon realizing that his desire to write had died, decided that there was no reason to live? Or, could it be that when the strength and courage of Thomas Hudson died, Hemingway could find none of these qualities in himself? Hemingway may have used his character as a prop to help him last a few months longer. As Faulkner stated so well, "The poet's voice need not merely be the record of man; it can be one of the props, the pillars to help him endure and prevail!" Hemingway may have written not only to satisfy the needs of the public, but also, to satisfy his own needs.

Elana E. Evans

## *THE LOTTERY*

The use of dramatic point of view in "The Lottery" permits Shirley Jackson to build up to her effectively shocking conclusion. The characters are commonplace and the setting is deceptively pleasant, yet throughout the story, there are foreshadowing suggestions that something disagreeable exists about this lottery.

Through the dramatic point of view, Jackson presents flat but highly symbolic characters. For example, there is Dickie Delacroix whose last name means "of the cross," and, of course, the crucifixion of Jesus Christ established the cross as a symbol of sacrifice. The author further emphasizes the name by informing us that "the villagers pronounced this name 'Dellacroy'," perhaps as a token of unfamiliarity or strangeness. And then there is the official of the lottery, Mr. Summers, who ironically works for a coal company: coal is a commodity associated with winter, and winter is a season linked with death. He carries the black wooden box into the square and draws in the lottery himself, but is a surprisingly "jovial man" and "people were sorry for him, because he had no children and his wife was a scold." Mr. Summers, one could safely state, is a walking contradiction. Finally, there is the tardy Mrs. Hutchinson whose character mildly recalls

the typical schoolroom scapegoat. As she begins to make her way through the crowd, "the people separated good humoredly" and after she locates her family, there is a "soft laughter." Something about Tessie Hutchinson and the crowd signals trouble ahead for her. Even when Tessie is speaking to Mrs. Delacroix, who would later hurl the largest stone at her, there is an uneasiness about Tessie. She appears to be in a hurried state at the beginning of the lottery, and later becomes defiant and frantic at her stoning.

If all the previously mentioned symbolic characters are overlooked, Jackson's prosaic setting should certainly summon up the reader's curiosity as to the outcome of the lottery. As Mr. Summers starts to call names from his list, the intensity among the crowd can be felt. This crowd of families is portrayed in a square, with a pile of stones and a black box; and it is almost high noon on summer's day. All of the aforementioned details call to mind a ritualistic gathering from the past when people made sacrifices to the gods for a plentiful crop or a heavy rain. Indeed, the box from which the townspeople draw slips of paper invites an intimating paragraph about the history of this lottery. We learn that the lottery has been going on for some time. The author again employs symbolism at this point when she has Old Man Warner state that it is his seventy-seventh time in the lottery, the number seven signifying luck. Mr. Summers and Mr. Adams (Adam, the first man in the story of Creation and, consequently, the first man to take risks) "grinned at one another humorlessly and nervously." Up until this point, it may be difficult to see that there is something sinister about this game of chance. As the story develops, our suspicions are confirmed when Tessie becomes angry over Bill's picking out the spotted piece of paper. She insists on doing it over, but her protests are in vain. She even becomes slightly violent when "she snatched a paper out and held it behind her." All of the Hutchinsons reveal their slips of paper, and it is Tessie who has got the spotted one. She is then "quickly" stoned to death.

Shirley Jackson's masterful story told in the dramatic point of view contains all the elements necessary in creating a startling conclusion. It does contain some clues that are not evident on the first reading. Although her characters are flat, Jackson's use of the objective point of view gives this story the quality of being universal; this horrific incident could have occurred anywhere. As a story and to serve a purpose, "The Lottery" illustrates how tradition can become uncontrollably dangerous, and how the past and present (if one can imagine that something like this is done as a seasonal offering) are still closely linked.

Maria B. Dunn

## SAMMY'S CATS

Critics have discussed Sammy's associating women with animals in John Updike's "A&P." He refers to them as sheep, pigs, and creatures on about the same level, such as withches and houseslaves. But it has not been mentioned that he thinks of Queenie as an animal too, a cat to be exact. Nor are any of the other catlike descriptions mentioned either.

Although Sammy places Queenie above the other women, he still thinks of her as a lower species than himself. He refers to her as the "Queen." This label is significant because a female cat is called a queen. His descriptions of her are further proof of this connotation. For instance, she puts on an air of independence and pride. Rather than being led, she leads the other two girls, possibly her kittens. Aloof and catlike she does not look around. She walks straight, "...on these long white prima-donna legs," in her feline way, slowly "...testing the floor with every step, putting a little deliberate extra action into it." She is stalking some prey, perhaps fish—herring snacks. To Sammy, Queenie is sexy and sophisticated. He likes her, but she can not have a mind: "do you really think it's a mind in there or just a little buzz like a bee in a glass jar?" But in his effort to define this particular female he shows that he is essentially an amorous tomcat.

Sammy is so overcome by his satyriasis that he devotes the majority of the story to Queenie's anatomy and describes her in cat-like terms. He singles out her "clean bare plane of the top of her chest down from her shoulder bones like a dented sheet of metal tilted in the light. I mean it was more than pretty"—an exact description of the bib or chest of a cat, always clean, smooth, and shiny. Her face also belongs to a cunning creature; he describes it a "prim," which means "demure," "sedate," "quiet," "composed" and "serious," all adjectives which might be used to describe a Siamese or Manx. She holds her head high making her neck look stretched, but this is no disappointment for Sammy, who is attracted to her feline arrogance. Conscious of her superiority, she feigns indifference to those around her. Sammy notes that she must have noticed Stoksie and him watching, but she would not let on. "Not this queen." Sammy shows signs of nervousness, but of course this tomcat does not give up.

Because of Sammy's continuous stare, Queenie glances at the girls, her "kittens." She must protect them, and make sure they are behaving. As kittens would do, they "kind of huddled against her for relief, and then



they all three of them went up the "cat and dog food aisle." Certainly, being finicky this queen passes this aisle and heads for the real meat counter.

One of the kittens, the chunky one, is momentarily attracted to a box of cookies just as kittens like toads and green lizards, which are bad for them. But on second thought, maybe she should follow Queenie's example; surely there is something better than this at the end of the hunt. Similarly, as a kitten matures it will learn which creatures are nutritious, and will try, like its mother, for birds and mice.

Other creatures in the store are at first startled by the three, but since sheep and houseslaves do not feel threatened by the cats, they return to grazing. And Queenie goes on coolly, "walking against the usual traffic" as a cat so often does, "with her feet padding along naked over our cream floor."

As Sammy becomes more overwhelmed, his descriptions become less subtle. One can nearly hear the emphasis he is conveying in such phrases as: "Kingfish Fancy Herring Snacks in Pure Sour Cream," a cat's delight; or smooth "icecream coats," like the coats of many Persians. As the tomcat overpowers him, he depicts her "two smoothest scoops of vanilla...her narrow pink palm." He also "nestled the herring...twisted its neck," as cruel as a cat.

Almost as if Queenie and Chunky are aware of Sammy's portrayal, when reprimanded by Lengel for their attire, they show true feline responses. Queenie becomes temporarily embarrassed when scolded, a genuine catlike emotion. And Chunky lashes out at her pretentious enemy, just as a kitten would do. As Lengel pursues his reproachment, Queenie remembers her place and says, "We are decent." She begins to strike back, lower lip stiffening, claws out, voice hissing, and eyes flashing deep blue like those of a Siamese.

Sammy quits his job trying to make points with the girls. So the tomcat strolls into the parking lot to claim his reward, but cats do not give anyone credit for favors rendered. They are nowhere in sight, and the tomcat, through this crisis, realizes "how hard the world was going to be...hereafter." Now crown the Queen!

*Cynthia Richards*



## MAMA YOUNGER— TYRANNY AND TENDERNESS

In the play *Raisin In The Sun* Lorraine Hansberry initially portrays Mama Younger as the matriarchal, sometimes tyrannical, ruler of the Younger household. Hansberry shows Mama's tyrannical nature from the outset of the play in Mama's reaction to her son and grandson leaving the house in the morning: "Who that 'round here slamming doors at this hour?" Obviously, Mama has staked her claim as the person who decides how this household runs. Yet as the play proceeds, we see Mama as much more than just a tyrant. We see that Mama deeply loves her family and that she is sensitive and caring enough to give her family what they need in their particular situation.

Mama first shows her depth of character in her relationship with her daughter-in-law, Ruth. Mama initially expresses her opinion that Ruth is not giving Travis, Mama's grandson, adequate nourishment. Mama asks, "What you fix for his breakfast this morning?" Irritated at Mama's insinuation that she is inadequately caring for her family Ruth replies, "I feed my son Lena! I gave him hot oats—is that all right!" Most people would now apologize because they realize their interference is not welcome. Not only does Mama not apologize, she adds insult to injury: "Put a lot of nice butter on it? He likes lots of butter." This seems to prove Mama to be a tyrant. It also seems to show that Mama is totally insensitive to Ruth and her feelings.

Yet, as Ruth contemplates an abortion and her marriage with Walter becomes increasingly hostile, Mama shows a great deal of sensitivity and love to Ruth. As Walter tells Ruth that he doesn't want her around him, Mama comes to Ruth's defense: "Walter, what is the matter with you? Ruth's a good, patient girl in her way...don't make the mistake of driving that girl away from you." Mama shows here a great deal of respect and love for Ruth—love and respect for Ruth that totally contradicts the impression left by Mama's earlier comments to her. Mama again defends Ruth to Walter as Walter finds out about Ruth's contemplation of abortion: "When the world gets ugly enough—a woman will do anything."

In these instances Mama shows a depth of character that adds a great deal more to her than just the tyrannical side. She shows a great deal of love for Ruth and she also shows extreme sensitivity to Ruth's feelings and situa-

tions. Mama's defense of Ruth's contemplation of abortion is decidedly surprising considering Mama is a very religious woman. Mama's actions show an understanding of another person's plight at the expense of her own beliefs.

Religion also plays an important part of Mama's first encounter with her daughter Beneatha. Mama's reaction to Beneatha saying there is no God is that she slaps Beneatha across the face and makes her recite: "In my mother's house there is still God." Between this and Mama telling Beneatha, "There are some ideas we ain't going to have in this house. Not long as I am at the head of this family," Mama can only be thought of as a tyrant.

But are these the only feelings Mama shows to Beneatha? Mama respects her daughter enough to support her in wanting to go to medical school. She is the same daughter who Mama once asked—"Why you got to flit so from one thing to another, baby?" Believing Mama to only be tyrannical, one would think Mama would just tell her daughter to forget such nonsense and marry her rich boyfriend George. Yet Mama supports her daughter not only in becoming a doctor but in her decision not to marry George.

Mama's poignant speech to Beneatha telling her to love her brother even after he lost her money for college shows her deep religious beliefs and her developing depth of character:

There is always something left to love. And if you ain't learned that, you ain't learned nothing. Have you cried for that boy today? I don't mean for yourself and for the family 'cause we lost the money. I mean for him; what he been through and what it done to him. When you starts measuring somebody, measure him right child, measure him right. Make sure you done taken into account what hills and valleys he come through before he got to wherever he is.

This unequivocally shows the qualities of Mama's character. Mama shows love, compassion, and the Biblical teaching of turn the other cheek.

In this speech Mama also shows the love she has for her son, Walter. This instance, accompanied by other confrontations between Mama and Walter, shows that Mama's character runs true to form. When Walter wants to take the insurance money and invest in a liquor store, Mama explains to him in no uncertain terms that it isn't possible: "There ain't going

to be no investing in no liquor stores. I don't aim to have to speak on that again." Mama's decision leads Walter to quit his job and start drinking. The tyrannical Mama would tell him to act like a man, yet the insightful, compassionate Mama realizes that she has caused Walter's problems. Realizing this, she relinquishes her authority as head of the Younger household:

Listen to me now. I say I been wrong, son. There ain't nothing as precious to me....There ain't nothing worth holding on to, money, dreams, nothing else—if it means—if it means it's going to destroy my boy. Monday morning I want you to take this money....It isn't much, but it's all I got in the world and I'm putting it in your hands. I'm telling you to be the head of this family from now on like you supposed to be.

This brings Walter out of his despair until he loses the money to his friend Willy. Even after he loses the money Mama continues to love her son, as shown in her speech to Beneatha, and she continues to allow him to make the family decisions.

Walter's final decision is whether or not to move to their new house in the all-white neighborhood. After initially deciding not to move and to sell the house back to the neighborhood people, Walter changes his mind and tells Mr. Linder that they're going to move because — "My father — he earned it." The point is that no matter what decision Walter made Mama was going to abide by it. As she tells Mr. Linder, "I am afraid you don't understand. My son said we was going to move and there ain't nothing left for me to say."

In her relationship with Walter, Mama shows over and over the tenderness and caring she has for her family. Walter, more than anyone, gives reason enough for Mama to be a tyrant. Instead of becoming a tyrant that totally dominates Walter, she becomes a sensitive mother that loves her son.

Mama repeatedly shows that there is more to her than tyranny. Even though she can be tyrannical if the situation calls for it, she also proves that she can be loving, sensitive, and full of tenderness given the necessary circumstances. Mama will never stop being a mother to her children. She will express her opinion if she feels it's needed; she will also give her children the support and love that they need to become the best adults they can be.

Ken Calhoun



## LIGHT ON THE BLIGHTED STAR: THE CHARACTER OF TESS

The world of Thomas Hardy is a bleak one, governed by chance and accident, or perhaps a capricious God. The men and women of Hardy's novels live lives of misery, misery all too infrequently mitigated by brief periods of happiness which usually end up intensifying the sorrow. Amid the darkness of this universe and the imbroglio of human error, there seems precious little to be hopeful about. If there is no hope in the novels of Thomas Hardy, why should anyone read them? Is there anything in Hardy's darkened vision that serves to inspire or uplift? The answers to these questions, I feel, are that there is hope in Hardy's novels and there is something to inspire the reader. This something is Hardy's characterization. Take, for example, Tess d'Urberville, the heroine of the novel that bears her name. There is something about Tess that not only captivates readers and critics alike, but also provides some measure of hope in an otherwise dismal world. Tess says that she lives on a "blighted star"(25),but through her suffering, her resiliency and a certain innate purity, by the novel's end she somehow makes life on the star a bit easier to bear.

Human suffering is absolutely crucial to a Thomas Hardy novel. In Tess, the heroine's suffering accomplishes two things. First, Tess' pain elicits the reader's sympathy for Tess. This is especially true in the early sections of the novel, before her fall. Tess' suffering can be either physical or emotional. The scene in which the Durbeyfield horse, Prince, is killed, is a prime example of emotional pain which makes the reader feel sorry for Tess. Tess takes all the blame for the accident, despite the fact that had her father not been drunk she never would have had to be making the midnight sojourn. "'Tis all my doing—all mine....No excuse for me—none," she laments (27). Her pain goes further than simple guilt, for Hardy makes it clear that Tess feels like a "murderess" (28). Hardy furthers the reader's sympathy for Tess in the scenes preceding her seduction. While walking homeward with her fellow workers, Tess' innocent laughter at Car Darch's humorous predicament results in a near fight and ends up precipitating her unhappy seduction (57). The scenes with Alec which depict the false d'Urberville as a lecherous villain also create sympathy for Tess (60, 45).

Hardy reserves Tess' real suffering for a different purpose. Regardless



of the extent of her consent in the seduction, Tess still broke a moral rule. She must pay for her error. (This type of suffering has a good deal to do with the subject of Tess' purity, which will be discussed later.) Irving Howe writes, "In her violation, neglect and endurance Tess comes to seem Hardy's most radical claim for the redemptive power of suffering..." (Howe 440).

Tess begins paying quite early, with the scorn of her neighbors and subsequent birth of her child. Tess suffers when the village folk whisper about her in church. "She knew what their whispers were about, grew sick at heart and felt that she could come to church no more" (72). Tess' attitude toward the baby is also a source of pain. In a way, she bitterly resents it, for it is a symbol of her error; but her maternal instinct is also very strong, and she loves the baby. Her pain surrounding the child climaxes with its death (81). Though her child dies, her guilt lives on, and she carries it with her to her new job at Talbothays. Perhaps worse than physical suffering, Tess is losing her sense of self-worth. "My life looks as if it has been wasted," she says (107). Even in her relationship with Angel Clare, Tess cannot be wholly happy. "She walked in brightness but she knew that in the background those shapes were always spread" (164). Her emotional suffering reaches a peak after she confesses her sin to Angel, only to have him refuse forgiveness. His rejection is an affirmation to her of what she had long felt: that she is a wicked person, not fit for life with Angel (192). This suffering is followed by terrible physical suffering at Flintcomb Ash. The work and desolate environment reduce her to the level of an insect (238). Hardy's descriptions of Flintcomb Ash and Tess' work, both in the fields and on the threshing machine, probably rival anything in Dickens. In this wasteland Tess works and dreams of Angel.

By the novel's end the suffering becomes too much. The death of her father, the ousting of her family from the village and the ironic untimely return of Angel Clare push Tess over the edge. Rosemary Benzig says Tess is "driven by suffering to madness" (204). The fascinating thing about Tess' suffering is how willingly she accepts it. D. H. Lawrence writes that Tess "respects utterly the other's right to be." Tess' patience and passivity is, I think, inspiring. In the face of human error and aggression, be it the low villainy of Alec or the lofty hypocrisy of Angel or the common ignorance of the country folk, Tess is nearly always strong but never intrusive or intolerant.

If Tess is amazing, because she accepts her pain so willingly, she is even more incredible in that she maintains her resiliency and her personality at the same time. Until the very end she never breaks. Howe writes, "she is human life stretched and racked, yet forever springing back to renewal" (440). The novel is thick with examples of Tess' resiliency, which is the real-

ly inspiring aspect of her suffering. An early example is Tess' reaction to the Biblical verse painter whom she meets after her fall. The verses are about adultery and damnation, but Tess shows us that she is not going to be broken by them. "Pooh," she says, "I don't believe God said such things" (68). It is not a rejection of God, only a rejection of the Old Testament mentality. When the church will not baptize her infant, Tess decides that she will do it herself (80). She refuses to let the stuffier conventions of religion destroy her spirit. Tess' burial of her infant is a heart-rending affair. Denied permission to bury him in the churchyard, she lays him in the "shabby corner of God's allotment....where all unbaptized infants, notorious drunkards and suicides are laid" (83). Tess makes a little cross from sticks and twine and leaves some flowers in a marmalade jar.

The very fact that Tess survives Angel's rejection is a tribute to her resiliency. She is deeply, deeply hurt, angry more at herself than at him, but she goes on with life, always with the hope that he will return. When she stumbles upon the wounded pheasants in the field, she puts them out of their misery, exclaiming, "...to suppose myself the most miserable being on earth in the sight o' such misery as yours." It does not take much to stop Tess from feeling bad about her plight. Even at Flintcomb Ash, Tess remains strong. In one description of the frozen, ugly field that Tess works in, three words leap out: "Still Tess hoped" (239). She seems a woman who will not give up. I feel that even her dubious mental state at the end of the novel and her murder Alec are in evidence of her resiliency. Despite her implied madness, Tess' actions in the last chapters are essentially healthy, if that term can be used. Tess is still striving to get back with Angel and the murder of Alec is a means to that end. Basically, Alec's lechery and villainy are the chief causes of Tess' fate, and he deserves punishment of some type. Dorothy Van Ghent defends the murder: "Tess is finally creative by the only measure of creativeness that this universe holds, the measure of the instinctive and the natural" (438). Alec is the only person who masters Tess in a negative fashion; thus, he must die so that Tess can be free of his stain.

The combination of suffering and resiliency leads to what is perhaps the most important thing about Tess: her purity. Hardy caused quite a stir when he insisted in his subtitle that a murderess and an adulteress could be pure. Hardy based his claim on Tess' intentions, which he considered blameless. W. Eugene Davis has some doubts, however, about Tess' real intentions. He says that Hardy is unclear in his treatment of the seduction and the events during the weeks afterward and that Hardy leaves too much to the imagination. Davis says that the reader ends up loving the strong, passionate, impure Tess. I disagree. First of all, I think Hardy is quite clear in his treatment of the seduction. "Doubtless some of Tess d'Urberville's mailed ancestors rollicking home from a fray had dealt the same measure

even more ruthlessly, towards peasant girls of their time''(63). If this does not indicate some type of force on the part of Alec, then I don't know what does. Secondly, Davis ignores the extent of Tess' suffering in the novel. Her emotional and physical pains are like a penance. They cleanse her of whatever sin she may have committed. Tess' purity is not an ordinary, conventional one. It transcends ordinary morality and ordinary chastity. Howe says that Tess is beyond the stain of her circumstances and that she "embodies a feeling for the inviolability of the person" (441). Her inviolability is rooted in her ability to accept suffering and in her good will for the people with whom she comes in contact. Tess is an adulteress, but she comes much closer to the real Christian ideal of chastity than just about anyone.

Thomas Hardy's universe is an oppressive, unjust place, but it is not the universe that he creates that is most important in his novels. What is important is the unbelievable achievements of his heroes in the face of oppression. The events of Tess' life are rotten. Nonetheless, Tess becomes a beautifully whole person. She is passionate, tender, merciful, kind and loving in a world that is none of these things. *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* is a story not about the degeneracy and falseness and injustice of the world; rather, it is a story about the triumph of the human spirit against overwhelming odds.

James Richard Brown

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TELLING THE  
TRUTH, MOSTLY:  
POEMS,  
NARRATIVES,  
STORIES

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*Michael West*

## BATEAU

A few years back when I was still living at home, I had the advantage of owning a small, wooden bateau of about twelve feet in length and of narrow beam. Being a rather small craft, it was very light and easy to tip over; nevertheless, it was a sturdy vessel capable of carrying three without too much fear of capsizing. Although it was rather crude looking from its uneven lines, it handled very well under most circumstances, and it provided my partners and me freedom from the clutches of land.

I found it one day during a search for a boat that would take us to a neighboring island for a weekend camp. It belonged to a friend on the opposite end of the isle. Tony Dentee and his father had built the boat, and it was serving Mrs. Dantee as a planter in a corner of their backyard. Conning Tony into letting me borrow it was a trick, but he told me he would sell it for thirty dollars plus my prized skateboard, which in those days was considered a hard bargain.

"Twenty-five dollars and the skateboard," I countered, "and you  
24, *Calliope*

throw in two paddles.”

Deliberating for a moment, he smiled and said, “Fine, but you must make sure my mom doesn’t see you take it, and be careful of her plants.”

“Great,” I replied. “You get the paddles, and I’ll get the boat.”

Tony helped me carry the boat home where we threw it in the tidal creek that runs behind my house. The bateau proved itself that camping trip, and I was won over by its ability to fascinate me.

The bateau led me away from land and into the marshes behind my house for long tours after school. It took me to small islands in search of driftwood and to quiet fishing holes where the only sound was gentle waves lapping against the hull and blood rushing in my ears. We ran together along the edges of Wormsloe Plantation seeking out snowy egrets resting in overhanging oaks. Old black men fishing on the bank would shout, “Move on Son, ya chasin’ my luck!” as I cut too close to their lines stretching in the breeze. Paddling quietly, I caressed the water to slip past deer along the banks on my way to the fishing holes hidden in the fog. These were the times I treasured most when I became part of the nature surrounding me.

My love for the new paths opened to me was also caught by my friend, Will. “Let’s go out in the boat. Let’s go fishing. Let’s go for a cruise,” he would say.

Having someone to join me in this pleasure was fun, and eventually we built a small dock out into the river inlet. The dock, built of small logs and lumber borrowed from old tree forts, included a floating section at the very end. It was located adjacent to our small camping area on the lagoon that we used for a summer swimming hole.

The first weekend after the dock was completed, Will and I camped there. We spent that night in lounge chairs at the end of the dock watching the waves carry firelight across the water. Although the images warmed our souls, a deeper burning penetrated our empty stomachs. Such was the effect of our father’s Canadian Whiskey down our dry gullets.

“Let’s go get some crabs,” Will said jumping up. “I know of two traps just out in the river,” he grunted as he slipped and fell into the bateau. The moon was up, so we paddled out and pirated the traps. This later

became a ritual to be repeated quite often without regard for the crab potter.

My stepfather owned a small, three horsepower boat motor that we "borrowed" upon occasion when we camped on islands beyond the reach of paddles, and it proved useful in night fishing and gigging with a Coleman lantern. Once, while holding the lantern to light a narrow channel, we were besieged by a school of alarmed mullett as they jumped out of the water toward the light. It was quite an experience to have all the fish we wanted jump into the boat.

I later let another friend take my boat to his home in Tarboro, South Carolina, so that he could hunt deer in the swamp behind his house. There it stayed for the longest time, out of my reach until I became the proud owner of a Volkswagen "Bug." Will and I then made several trips to the swamp to camp and fish. I had the perfect boat for the swamp because it could easily snake in and out of the large cypress groves through patches of moss that covered parts of the waterway. The only element that did not agree with my boat was the cypress knees. Hidden under the black water, they relentlessly jabbed the hull until the resulting crack forced me to remove it from the water for repairs.

The sense of pride and freedom I felt in driving home with my bateau strapped smartly on top of my Bug was overwhelming. With the Bug's great gas economy and the bateau on top, I felt I could conquer the world.

"Oh, shit," I said to myself as I saw the strands of rope peeling back from the front line holding the bow. I started to slow down.

"Oh, shit!" The line snapped and I braked harder. I watched the bow float up and down, hovering in the 50 mph wind. My eyes followed the bow up until I got to the rearview mirror where I saw my beloved bateau reeling end over end behind me as though it did not want to be left stranded.

"Oh, know," I moaned as I ran to remove my little boat from the oncoming traffic. It was split evenly in half. I screamed in agony as I pulled it off the highway into the tall grass away from the questioning stares of the slowing commuters.

I sat by my destroyed boat and cried the hardest I think I ever have. All those feelings and emotions I had experienced with this friend came boiling up, and I think I sat there an hour. Finally I pushed the remains into the



canal running the length of the road. Then I left.

Someday I plan to build another just like it. Until then, I will have to dwell on the memories it gave me—until my bateau and I again race the moon's reflection in the dark waters beneath us.

By Chris Weaver

## THE TIDES

Here,

This moment we stand where tomorrow  
we will lie.

This moment,  
The thinker thinks,  
The singer sings,  
The priest prays.

Tomorrow all will be swept  
by the tides away.  
The shattered heart palpitates,  
But feels no more,  
Knows too more than did yesterday.  
The sorcerer's magic wished by all.

The great ball of fire illuminates and warms  
The cold harsh planet.  
The beast trods on another day,  
Unaware of the gods,  
And the tides coyly play.

The demonic serpent slimes through the leaves  
of grass  
Attending his prey.  
The fires burn, hell reaps.

What guard does the beast have  
From the lethal flames? What armor?  
What chain?

What salve will mend  
His cremation of soul?

From sparks and ashes  
Does the beast  
Dare rise,  
And flirt with dissolution  
Amongst the tides?

Shall leaves on shelves be the beast's  
Armor  
Or shall they cast him in the  
Cremating heat?

The forbidden sweet bearer long since forgot.  
Fruit was gained and paradise lost.  
So the beast became more than slime on a rock.

The beast became  
Man,  
The weakest,  
Yet ruler and murderer of the land.

So thinker think, singer sing, priest pray,  
Tomorrow all will be swept by the tides  
away.

What will float the soul amongst the  
Waves; the warning now before the sea of  
Graves.

The buzzard shall swarm, the dove  
Will appear not.  
The wailing and echoes of tears will be heard  
In the darkness beyond where  
The only sound is none.

Creation, Evolution, Desolation,  
Has been done.

By Jeffery Smith

# LICK

The light which illuminated the room came from the small lamp on my nightstand. I lay in bed attempting to interpret the evening paper, while shadows of darkness draped the corners of my bedroom. The clock on my mantle struck the eleventh hour.

Reading fatigued my eyes and made them lust for silent slumber. "Buster," I called for my trustworthy companion. He was a small mutt when I first found him, but he wasted no time in becoming a large and loveable friend. His body lumbered out of the darkness, which filled the hall, and stood in the doorway wagging his tail. "It's bedtime Buster," I told him and he lay beside the bed. I folded the paper properly and turned off the lamp. Light gave way to darkness.

I reached down with my hand, like so many times before, and Buster told me goodnight with a lick on the back of my hand; this was a bedtime ritual. It happened this way every night. I liked it this way and I guess Buster did too. I closed my eyes and nestled in the bedsheets. I found it easy to drift to sleep that evening.

Just as I was on the verge of complete relaxation the phone rang. I fumbled in the darkness for the lamp which I had read by earlier and answered the phone with a groggy hello. The party on the other side of the line gave no answer. "Hello," I said a second time. "Listen, if you kids don't stop this I will have to call the police!" I protested and slammed down the phone. "Those kids don't have any respect for us people who like to sleep at this time of night, Buster," I said in a bitter tone. Buster moaned as if to say, "just forget about it." I turned off the lamp and got comfortable in my bed.

I lay there wondering about my strange phone call. Could it have been a practical joke? Could someone have been in trouble and too scared to speak? No, I was convinced it was just kids. It had happened before around Halloween. Just then I heard a half-snorted whimper that echoed down the hall and ended in my bedroom.

I lay there wondering about my strange phone call. Could it have been a practical joke? Could someone have been in trouble and too scared to speak? No, I was convinced it was just kids. It had happened before around Halloween. Just then I heard a half-snorted whimper that echoed down the hall and ended in my bedroom.

"Buster, here Buster," I called. I could hear him trotting down the hall. I lowered my hand over the edge of the bed and again he licked my hand to let me know everything was all right. Somewhere in the darkness I heard a faint noise that made me suspect a prowler. Fear raced up my spine and the air in my lungs seemed to almost freeze. "Stay Buster," I said as I crept out of bed and down the hall. The clock on the mantle of my fireplace struck twelve.

I first stopped at the guest bedroom. No one was there, but I took the baseball bat that was in the closet and crept on to the next room.

The bathroom was undisturbed. The cap was still off the toothpaste and water dripped slowly into the sink. The soap remained in the center of the tub and my towel was still on the floor. My next stop was the den.

I switched on the lamp which rested on the endtable near the couch. It illuminated the room enough to let me know that no one was there. The old clock on the mantle of my fireplace ticked louder than before. I had but one room left. The dining room and kitchen joined to form one room.

My heart raced and beat louder than before. Nervous sweat dripped off my face as I quietly sneaked down the hall. I knew that he was in this room or he wasn't in the house.

As if a bolt of lightning had struck my nerves, I remembered the strange phone call. What if this were the person who had called before? Was he waiting for me? What lay in store for me when I turned on the light?

Sweat soaked my clothing. I gripped the bat tightly. Somehow, I knew that danger lurked beyond the doorway. As I turned on the light, my heart-beat seemed to drown all sense of perception.

Dangling from the light above the kitchen table was the corpse I once called Buster. The rope around his neck turned him slowly to expose a cut along the abdominal region of his body. His entrails lay on the table and resembled a bloody entwinement. Blood dripped from the edge of the large oak table.

The horrid sight gagged. I knew I was going to be sick. I ran to the bathroom in time to heave my nightly snack into the toilet. I grabbed the washcloth and wiped my tears and mouth.

Sadness and fear seemed to lump in my throat and stomach. We had been such good friends for so long. Just then the phone rang.



“Hello,” I answered. The party on the other side of the line didn’t say a word. “Look, if you don’t have anything to say, then don’t call me.” As I was hanging up the receiver the person on the phone whispered something that sounded like a soft murmur. “What?” I demanded. “Humans lick too,” hissed the voice. I dropped the phone as a chill raced up my spine.

Keith Perdue

## ACADEMIC QUESTION

How can I,  
when Sophie front  
row right, nearest  
the window,  
blinks cobwebs away and  
shifts and studies  
the thrush  
perched on the sill  
singing April songs,  
say  
“Please PAY ATTENTION--  
this material is VERY  
IMPORTANT!” when I,  
eighteen years later,  
still remember that warm  
afternoon when I stared  
and listened to outside sights  
and sounds and missed  
what my teacher  
was saying,  
and even now, seeing  
the new greens and  
the soft glow of that  
Spring sun and hearing the  
murmur of that long ago  
daydream afternoon again,  
have my breath  
taken away once more?

By Steve Ealy



*Photo by J. Gulle*

# REFLECTION

The wine glass has spilled

The Heart has

B r o k e n

The record plays again and then again.

The needle feels the hurt  
that the ballad renders.

The forsaken lover triumphs in his misery.

Wondering why.

Wondering why not.

What could have been was not.

What should have been is  
still

fantasized the way it always was.

Even the fantasy shall grow dim

The images of sand have washed away.

Reality exults as it always must.

Memories are buried with sorrowful dust  
The clock still chimes,

The sun still rises,  
the tears will dry.

Love will perhaps one day reflect.  
It can never be reflected.

By Jeff Smith

*Calliope, 33*





*Photo by J. Gulle*



# AMERICUS

Ever since, as an undergraduate, I had heard Clarence Jordan, speak, I have wanted to visit Koinonia Farm. Nestled between Americus and Plains, Koinonia Farm was founded by Jordan and his wife Florence in 1942 as a biracial community of faith, and has survived both threatened and actual violence from the Ku Klux Klan, economic boycotts led by the more respectable White Citizen's Council, and its abandonment by many of its original supporters.

When I was finally able to visit the farm recently, eighteen years after I had heard Jordan speak at Furman University, and sixteen years after his death, I was curious about the emotional climate of the surrounding communities: what did local people think now, and how did they treat Koinonia and its residents? After a communal lunch, served in the farm's meeting hall, Florence Jordan invited me to her house. An unseasonably warm October afternoon allowed us to sit on her screened porch and drink iced-tea, spiced with mint, as we talked.

"Do they think that you're crazy, or dangerous, or do they accept you?"

"No, they don't think we're crazy," she said. Looking out over an already harvested field, off toward the low-cost housing built and sold to local Blacks by Koinonia, she continued, "Many respect us now, at least for our courage. But some of the people around here will never accept us. After some of the things they did to us, they can't admit that they were wrong." Clarence Jordan had told of some of the the things they did to Koinonia when I heard him speak: bombings, sabotage of farm equipment, rifle shots and crosses burning in the night, people fired from their jobs for associating with Koinonia residents. Today, whether or not they can admit that they were wrong, whether or not they respect Koinonia and its people, local people deal with Koinonia, and they let it survive in peace.

Today Koinonia, appears to be thriving, with thirty or so full-time residents who have committed their lives to the farm and its related operations, and volunteers who come for a few months at a time. A mail order business in peanuts, pecans, and fruitcakes continues to grow and brings in

enough money to support the basic necessities of the community's lifestyle. The day I visited, the aroma of fruitcake filled the air.

As we talked, first about her husband, and then about the early days of Koinonia, our conversation somehow drifted to South Africa. One Jordan son had worked in South Africa for a number of years, had married there, and only recently returned to the States, disheartened over the prospects for peaceful reform. Florence Jordan told me of her trips to South Africa, and of her friends there—Beyers Naude and others, some in exile, some in prison, and some free only at the price of political inactivity. She spoke of the growing pessimism she sensed. Some see no hope but in violence... As she talked, images filled my mind—of soldiers firing tear gas and shotguns, of personnel carriers rolling down empty streets, and of 'Trojan Horse maneuvers' used to lure protestors close so that they would be easy targets for hidden policemen.

The day I visited Koinonia was the day Benjamin Moloise was lynched by the government of South Africa. In his introduction to his 'Cotton Patch Version of Paul's Epistles,' Clarence Jordan explained his translation of the word 'crucifixion':

We have...emptied the term 'crucifixion' of its original content of terrific emotion, of violence, of indignity and stigma, of defeat. I have translated it as 'lynching,' well aware that this is not technically correct. Jesus was officially tried and legally condemned, elements generally lacking in a lynching. But having observed the operation of Southern 'justice,' and at times having been its victim, I can testify that more people have been lynched by 'judicial action' than by unofficial ropes.

The day I visited Koinonia, unable to think of peace in South Africa, I was equally unable to imagine smoke from burning crosses hanging like the stench of death over the place where I sat, rather than the sweet smell of fruitcake. As we sat talking in this now peaceful haven, the uncertainty, danger and fears of Koinonia's early years were difficult for me to grasp.

South Africa is not Sumter County, Georgia. The problems of the one cannot be reduced to the problems of the other. The political and economic context of 1942 rural Georgia and of contemporary South Africa are radically different, but the fear, the hatred, the terror, and the Christian call in both places are the same. The lesson of Koinonia is not simple, for it is neither fatalism, nor private nonpolitical piety, nor violence in the name of Christ. The message of Koinonia, needed especially when both official and

unofficial violence is on the rise, is that Christians are called to allow the grace of God to flow through themselves and their actions, to heal human brokenness.

Many visitors have left Koinonia disappointed when "they discovered that we were just people," Florence Jordan said. The lesson of Koinonia is that "just people," acting in love, can rechannel the great currents of social and political injustice. "Now these three things endure: faith, hope, and love; but the greatest of all is love. Seek diligently for love," is how Clarence Jordan translated I Corinthians 13:13--14:1. It is this love which makes Christians the salt of the earth. If we lose our savor, how then can we flavor the world?

Steve Ealy

## GRADUATION

Standing at Graduation  
heart full  
of hopes, dreams  
purpose-  
goals set firmly  
before me  
ready to face  
opposition  
determined to  
overcome...

Time passed slowly  
dreams faded  
hopes diminished  
goals became  
unreachable  
unattainable-  
tears fall  
my heart breaks  
pain turns to numbness-  
death of a dream...

Anonymous



*Photo by Marius Ruja*



# A.N.C.

People of the world, "Wake Up!  
From your hallucinating dream."  
And look around you,  
For you're not blind  
And listen to the chanting  
Of the partisans:

"I'm the soldier of freedom,  
In the army of men.  
We are the chosen...  
We are the partisans.  
The cause, it is noble,  
And the cause, it is just.  
We are ready to pay with our lives...  
If we must.  
For our days are not numbered  
And our souls you can't buy.  
In Babylon, you are torturing Mama Africa,  
But there she won't die."

Silence falls upon South Africa  
With a feeling of black death.  
Gutters overflow with people  
Wanting Mandela to awake.

In Pretoria Apartheid is ending  
The black smog fills the air.  
For believers and achievers  
The Revolution will go on and on and on.

From the factories, the white smoke  
Brings about an evil smell.  
Some of the partisans have been caught  
And exterminated in a cell.

Their life is never ending  
They ... live not.

They are those who under pressure  
Are killing you, From the inside-out.

They have nothing to receive but glory  
On this and every day.  
They have gone through life, cruelly  
Beaten, starved, until their tears turned gray.

In the middle of the night  
Scavengers begin to prowl.  
Eating the dead, turning Red  
Breaking up the concrete wall.

This night's the time for recollection  
On this night Botha, pray.  
For Ghandi and King were assassinated  
But Mandela is alive... "Apartheid is no way."

To all the partisans,  
May they live tomorrow  
To see Freedom,  
"God make this night Holy."  
They brought so much hope  
To so much sorrow  
\*silent night has no sunny day.

People of the world, "Wake Up!  
From your hallucinating dream."  
Please! Look around you  
For you're not blind.  
Please! Listen with your heart  
To the chanting of the partisans:

"For all of us who seek freedom  
She knocks on no one's door.  
She is alone and she is chained  
Behind steel curtains and concrete walls.  
And below her are the graves

Of all who died without a name.  
And behind there is but sadness  
And in front, your black-white face.”

Dedicated to: Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela,  
Leader of the African National Congress(A.N.C.),  
Who tried to put an end to Apartheid  
In South Africa.  
Address since 1963: Pollsmoor Prison,  
Near Capetown, Republic of South Africa.

By Marius Ruja

## ADMINISTRATIVE LAW

Bureaucrats tiptoe in on  
Elephant feet.

They sit on the city,  
Flatten it and order it  
With their heavy haunches,  
And then lumber off  
Down the road.

By Steve Ealy



*Photo by J. Gulle*



# KINK FAROUK

Farouk of Egypt was a kinky king.  
He painted his toes, in his ears wore rings.

He dined on beluga, quail eggs and Moet,  
Hibernated to Paris and turned into suet.

Bediamonded, moustachioed, corpulently regal,  
In Mercedes he cruised, exotically purple.

When he wobbled abroad, his harem all giggled.  
Then he died and left them with nothing to wiggle.

By Bob Strozier

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*The following essays were written in Dr. Roth's 201 English class. The assignment: to complete the novel, The Mystery of Edwin Drood by Charles Dickens who died before the novel's completion.*

## AN ESSAY ON: *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*

It was an exceptional day, and the sun had chased away the heavy, thick fog. Rosa Bud awoke with a small, happy song going through her mind. She was in love at long last and all was right with the world. No, not quite. She did not have the right to be so happy when her friends had such problems weighing them down.

"Poor Neville, poor Helena, and poor, poor Eddy," sighed Rosa.

*Calliope, 43*

Something had to be done!

Mr. Crisparkle and Mr. Grewgious were having a conversation about the mystery of Edwin Drood in the little corner office.

"Our man in Cloisterham has gathered as much information as possible to confirm our misgivings about our friend, Jasper," said Mr. Grewgious. "But we are now in need of a catalyst to bring about the proper reaction."

"Neville is waning under the heavy clouds of doubt that follow him. He is quite willing to help us in our plan," replied Mr. Crisparkle. "Is everything ready?"

"Yes, Mr. Datchery, alias Mr. Bazzard, being the playwright he is, has written a final scene that is worthy of the best of them," answered Mr. Grewgious. "Only think how long this game might have gone on if Mr. Datchery had not got Deputy to reveal the ring, but I suppose the information from Durdles and the Princess Puffer helped put him on the right track. It seems almost impossible that Jasper did not see the ring drop as he and Edwin struggled near the lime-pit after the visit to the tombs that night."

Deputy being there was a blessing in disguise. Although he could not help Edwin, finding the ring did just that. He is terribly afraid of Jasper. He said Jasper tried to choke him once," replied Mr. Crisparkle.

"Rightly so!" answered Mr. Grewgious. "The train will be leaving shortly, so we must hurry."

The China Shepherdess had left for a visit to her sister's home in London. The Crisparkle house was dark when the four men arrived there. As night fell, a mist of rain began to fall, and the wind chilled the air. The four were met by two more men, and they paired themselves into sets of two, leaving until only two remained.

The door of the crypt gave way as the key turned into the lock and the two men stole quietly down into the tomb. Neville, dressed in the disguise stood still as Mr. Crisparkle powdered him white.

The two remaining at the house settled down for the wait. Durdles pulled out his ever-present bundle and started munching a piece of bread and cheese. Mr. Grewgious cleared his throat and looked around for the

wine decanter.

“Yes, there it is,” said Mr. Grewgious. “Would you care for some wine, Durdles?”

“I don’t mind if I do,” replied Durdles. “Just a spot, mind you. Being the minor canon’s house, don’t want to be disrespectful.”

The two settled by the warm fire, and each drifted into his own thoughts.

Jasper was the last one out of the cathedral after choir practice. He pulled his coat close to his chest. It seemed colder than usual, but it wouldn’t matter soon. Jasper took a brief glance around and swiftly began his nightly walk to the crypts. One would think it was grief that led him on this morbid ritual, but the two that followed him knew better. As Jasper turned the key in the door, the light mist began to change into heavy sheets of rain, and he quickly closed the crypt door behind him. The musty smell hung in the air, and the light from the lantern hardly penetrated the thick, pea-soup fog. He was impatient to reach the chamber; the pipe and its sweetness awaited him. At the door, he chuckled to himself at the separate chamber with its own door, an indication of Mr. Sapsea’s self-importance. One could expect no less from the final resting place of the worldly mayor of Cloisterham. He pulled the door open and stopped at the spectacle that was before him. There was an eerie light in the room and in the middle of the tomb stood Edwin.

“No, it can’t be! You are dead, in the lime-pit, that night...” Stunned, Jasper put his face into his hands as if to wipe away the sight of Edwin, who only stood there. A glazed look came over Jasper’s face and he babbled as if replaying the events of that fateful Christmas Eve night.

“I called to you after you left Neville... we went to the tomb... I told you of Durdles’ remarkable find. We waited, but he did not show because he did not know. I knew. Ha ha ha! I knew! As we retraced the steps, I stepped behind you and slid the scarf off my neck. When we reached the lime-pit, I thought to play the Thuggee (I read about them once, very methodical murderers) and strangle you, but the lime-pit was there, quicker...a slight cry and a small struggle, then it was all over—the cry only enhanced Durdles’ ghost stories.”

Mr. Crisparkle stepped out of the fog to grab Jasper, but he had already started running up the stairs and out the door. Neville pulled off the disguise, and followed, but Jasper ran like a man demented. Outside

the graveyard awaited Mr. Datchery and Mr. Tartar. Jasper caught them off guard with a blood-curling scream and rapidly ran past them. Onward to the light house he ran. Up, up, up the circular stairs, into the lantern room, and out the door Jasper went. His breath was ragged and his mind as foggy as the night.

“A trick, it’s a trick!”

He turned to face the beach, and vaguely he thought he saw the figure of a woman.

“Rosa, Rosa, my darling, I’m coming.”

Mr. Tartar reached for Jasper, but Jasper fought him wildly and climbed out on the rail. In a maze of brilliant colors, lured on by dancing girls with huge feathers, Jasper leaped to his death.

Time clouds the memories and dulls the pain. Several months have passed since Jasper died. A bright day has dawned in Cloisterham. The bells of the cathedral peal a joyful sound as the bride and groom run out the door to the awaiting carriage. Showers of rice lightly rain down on the handsome couple as Mr. Tartar leans down and gently kisses his radiant bride, Rosa. Miss Twinkleton sniffs a noisy farewell to Rosa. Mr. Crisparkle smiles and turns to the twins.

“I wish you well, Neville and Helena. I cannot quite believe your good fortune. Your father was actually of royal Oriental blood, and you never knew. Is your grandfather’s ambassador leaving immediately?”

With a wishful glance towards Rosa, Neville replies, “Yes, I am afraid so.” He turns to Mr. Crisparkle, “How can we ever repay your great kindness and gentle guidance?”

“Not at all, my son. You have proved your worth beyond all doubts. Take care and write to me,” says Mr. Crisparkle.

Brother and sister walk to the royal carriage and turn to bid a final farewell. As the sun sets on the sleepy, little, tranquil cathedral town, Mr. Crisparkle walks slowly to his house whistling a happy tune.

Sandra Crapse



# TO TRAP A RAT

After dark Jasper departed for Durdle's place. He hurried as best he could to get there, making sure no one, especially the tiny Deputy, saw him along the way.

"Ho, hum Mr. Jarsper, what brings you here?" Durdles, half as stoned as his artistic works, was standing by the gate firmly holding his dinner bundle in his hands.

"Durdles, my good man, are you going somewhere or retiring for the evening?" Jasper asked, avoiding Durdle's question.

"No sir, Mr. Jarsper, I tain't headin' no whar's. De nights got'ta strange air about it and I's gonna stay inside. You'd better stay's inside too, Mr. Jarsper."

Jasper, noticing Durdles' present state, helped the stone-mason inside his home. Once it was apparent Durdles was fast asleep, Jasper took the keys and headed towards the crypt.

As he stepped outside a huge stone came crashing down before his eyes. Knowing what lie in front of him, Jasper waited for the next artillery shot to be fired before proceeding. The small, toothless urchin did not throw another stone, however. Instead Deputy backed away, reaching a safe distance, and commenced in chanting one of his ridiculous songs:

"Widdy-widdy-wee,  
Cat catch flea  
Widdy-widdy-wy,  
Cat gon'na die!"

I's a seen what'cha did, Mr. Jasper, I's a seen it!"

Deputy ran as swiftly as a jackrabbit and disappeared into the night.

Jasper, not paying any attention to the monstrous child, proceeded once again towards the crypt. As he was about to enter the tomb, he heard a familiar man's voice. He looked around to see who was there and noticed a figure, a man's figure, walking around Durdle's house. Thinking it must

be Durdles searching for his missing keys, Jasper quickly went inside and shut the door behind him.

## II

Mr. Tartar had visited many different lands before his seafaring days had ended. He knew from experience the various customs and rituals each one employed yet none were as distinctive as the Thuggee ritual of India.

Mr. Grewgious and Mr. Tartar departed for Cloisterham. They did not tell anyone of their destination or when they would return. Rosa was suspicious. Mr. Grewgious' sudden departure was unusual, but there was nothing for her to do except wait. That she did.

Grewgious and Tartar arrived at Mr. Crisparkle's promptly at 11:00 p.m.

"Has Jasper left the place yet?" inquired Mr. Tartar.

The three men quickly left the Minor Canon's and headed towards the Nun's house. They suspected Jasper might try to find Rosa and naturally would inquire at the House. As they were walking briskly towards the school, Mr. Datchery stopped them.

"Gentlemen, where are you going in such a rush?"

"We are searching for Mr. Jasper. Have you seen him anywhere?" Grewgious asked as if he knew all along Jasper's hiding place.

"Yes, I have," Datchery replied. "I saw him walking towards Durdle's house earlier this evening."

"That's it!" exclaimed Tartar. "The crypt. He's got to be using the crypt."

As swift as lightning the four men ran to Durdle's house. Once they had arrived, Tartar and Datchery headed for the tomb while the other two men stayed behind. Upon reaching the crypt, they found the door partly open and proceeded to go inside.

## III

Jasper was sitting on the cold, concrete floor making small circular gestures with his hands and mumbling a strange, distinctively foreign chant.

He appeared to be unaware of the men's existence. Slowly Jasper appeared to be coming out of his trance. Mr. Tartar, aware of the ritual's effects on its followers, motioned for Mr. Datchery to stay back. Tartar cautiously approached Jasper. The ex-navy man seized him by the hair, shaking him as one would a dusty linen towel. Jasper, coming to his senses, now realized he was not alone.

"How did you find me?" Jasper asked somewhat shocked. Then, looking into the musty darkness, Jasper suddenly lost his senses and began screaming Edwin's name. "I hate you!! I hate you!! You have no right coming back to me. I'll kill you again if I must."

It was at this instant Mr. Grewgious and the Minor Canon charged into the tomb and seized Jasper. Still cursing Edwin, and vowing revenge against the four men, John Jasper was carried away—never to be seen in Cloisterham again.

#### IV

Life was blooming again for Rosa. She remained in London knowing she could never return to Cloisterham, or the Nun's House again. Her loved ones were here, in London, and she was going to remain here with them.

Miss Twinkleton had gone back to the Nun's House after a duel with the Billickin. Miss Twinkleton, being the instructor that she is, tried to train the noticeably untutored landlady. The "Ruler of the House" instructed Miss Twinkleton what to do with her "Anglish."

The twins decided to live in London too since Rosa was so dear to the two of them. Neville, now proven innocent, still affectionately admired the little flower from afar. He did not, after much consideration, feel it fitting to court her due to Rosa's bonded friendship with Helena.

Tartar, knowing he could never love anyone as much or more than he presently loved Rosa, proposed to her on a beautiful, golden Sunday. The two were united in marriage exactly two weeks later.

Mr. Grewgious and Bazzard sat sipping hot tea by the fire. They both knew there was still an element missing in the mystery of the murder of Edwin Drood—the ring. Where it was no one knew. Not even Jasper; they asked him on the way to the asylum. He said he did not know the ring's whereabouts.

Somewhere in the deep, murky sea lies a rose; a flower not belonging in

this wasteland. For like its possessor, the jewel will never be seen again.  
Yet the warmth and love transformed through its living beauty will live  
on—forever.

Rosalind Evans

## L'ENFANT

Oh, where are you,  
Thoughts and hopes of things  
That would be?

A child's admirations change as the  
Tides of the sea.

What is seen now in that dusty mirror of  
yesterday.

Where has the child gone,  
That looked to the pages of tomorrow  
Rather than in his books of the day?

Cities and armies of a unique world are  
Lost and forgotten;  
Only a few relics remain in the mind of their  
god.

No searchers can find the civilizations  
That were not.

Where has the olympian gone?  
Is he with the justice and  
The driver of speed?

Why does the singer no longer perform his  
Concerts before the eager crowds?  
Why have the gladiators put away their  
Armor and spears?

The child has new worlds  
now.  
He grew lonely with his  
old toys.



The battles now  
He cannot control, nor can  
He raise a soldier from the dead.

His castles on the beach have long since  
washed away.

The wars now have  
Real hurts,  
And the child has cried when  
Blood has been made to bleed.

Allies of the changing times have gone  
Their ways; they can no longer  
Come out to play.

The child cannot go back to what was,  
But must go  
Toward,  
To what will be.

Faces are seen,  
But names not recalled.  
They were someone  
In a time passed by.

Time dares not stop for those who  
Live; it only stops for those who  
Die.

By Jeffery Smith

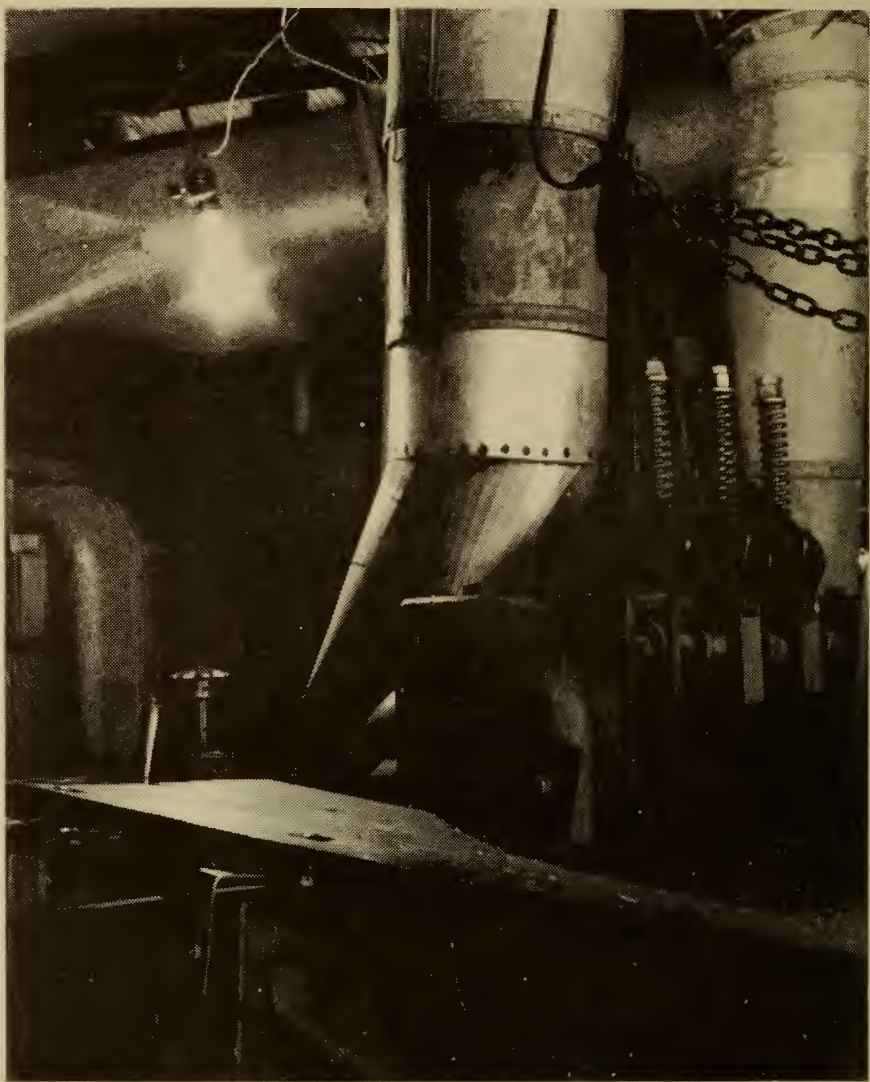
## QUESTIONS FORCED UPON ME BY MYSELF

What becomes of passion unused?  
Does it lose its fire, and burn to an ash?  
Or does it sleep throughout a lifetime of nights  
Untouched, unknissed, unspoken...

Is a passion unused, indeed passion at all?  
Or is it a tear  
That threatens to expose one's emptiness, so as to  
Beg for one less night alone?

What becomes of unused passion?

By Michel



## CAN YOU KEEP IT?

For four years now you've held a love for him.  
The polished smile and make-up wear so thin.  
Questions all abound; what do you really feel?  
Your thoughts are sound; is he just what you need?

Can you keep it?

Your fairy tale began upon the sand:  
A little spark caught on and burned your hand.  
Paperback romance—it led to other things—  
You tried to dance to tunes you could not sing.

The two of you assumed just one address:  
More time, less room, more touch, less talk—love less.  
But you did not mind, you figured, “A couple of days.”  
Your singer choked and left you out of phrase.

Can you keep it?

And now the time has come to make up your mind:  
Will you begin to see or will you stay blind?  
You tell him that you won't put up with the strain,  
So you get out before you take the blame.

Can you keep it?

Peter H. Clonts

## SUN AND RAIN

Farewell time that has passed.  
Paths have been trodden,  
Rivers have flowed,  
A mother has screamed with the  
painful joy of birth.  
Mourners have cried for themselves  
as they have buried the young and old.

The clock strikes twelve to the time that is,

that is now the time that was.  
Resolutions promised  
many forgot.  
A new time commences.  
What joys and tears will now be brought?  
The sun shall shine as the rains shall fall.  
The Earth spins on its axis.  
It will stop.  
The seasons will come  
Thoughts will be gained  
New life is promised but only with the  
sun and rain.

By Jeffery Smith

## TO HER KILLJOY PROFESSOR

Had I but world enough, and time  
This essay, Sir, would be no crime  
I would sit down and think which way  
To write, and pass this class okay.  
And by the English's Channel's side  
Shouldn't insights find, I by the tide  
Of slumber would abstain. I would  
Instead of ink, use drops of blood.  
And you should, if you please, confuse  
'Til in this course I've paid my dues.  
My essay collection should grow  
From the quagmire, sans undue sorrow.  
An hundred years should go to raze  
My professor, with this metaphorase.  
Two hundred to attempt such jest  
And thirty thousand to each test.  
In hopes one day you will impart  
That yes, you really have a heart.  
For once your essays would abate  
Give me time, you've made me celibate.  
But at my desk I always fear  
Bedtime's a thing of yesteryear  
I should be eating humble pie  
But somehow I'm not afraid to die.  
This pundit, then, shan't be around  
For professors to perplex, confound;



No sad farewell, for at last I  
Would be free of such futility.  
And my best theses turn to dust  
My favorite pen resign to rust.  
The grave's a blank and writless place  
Once there, no more must I erase.

Now therefore while this deadly view  
Rests on my quill, I'll bid adieu  
And while thy raging soul transpires  
By now, I'm sure, with unchecked ires,  
Please let me flee now while I may  
Quick, to a church, I need to pray.  
I may not live beyond this hour,  
Your wrath, I care not to feel its power.  
Let me roll this rhetoric, and all  
My Cliff notes up into one ball.  
Such prose as this needn't be so rife  
Especially if it costs one's life.  
In this match of wits, I may have won  
But now, you'll make me wish I'd none.

By S. A. Hooks

## STRUGGLE

To look within ourselves where answers lie,  
flung far beneath the realm of easy grasp  
made stronger by the wish to let them die  
yet knowing life requires such dreadful tasks-  
A searing pain, she feels it as before.  
It grips the thought and holds it like a vise.  
It lurches up then plunges down for more,  
and rising brings again the unchecked cries.  
She called it forth, this monster from her soul,  
the choice was hers: to battle or to run.  
Oh, what a price to pay for being bold!  
(She chides herself for thinking she had won).  
But somewhere in the calling forth, foretold  
a journey started-healing had begun.

By Claudia Turner Welch

## DR. CONRAD

It is Christmas night. The presents have been unwrapped and exclaimed over, the parties are finished, and the excitement that has been building over the past few weeks has at last climaxed and is beginning to die down. And I am left alone, as so often in the past, stranded here on a solitary promontory amidst a sea of memories.

I was a sensitive child -- perhaps more so in memory than in fact, but sensitive nevertheless. But rather than being an asset to me, this sensitivity which seems so admirable a trait in retrospect was in reality a great burden on me. All too often, my young mind was filled with confusion as I, an unwilling spectator, was drawn into the midst of human dramas far beyond either my understanding or my interest. One of these unsought and painful involvements came to me in the fall of my thirteenth year, the year that marked a split from childhood deep and traumatic as an earthquake's fault.

The school year began in the usual way for a shy, overweight boy of thirteen. As was customary, the first day of school was spent in renewing old friendships and making new ones; for some of us, however, it meant enduring a day of humiliating loneliness. I was relieved when the sixth and last period of the day finally arrived. For one thing, this meant that soon I could return home, to my room and my books. But also, I was excited about the class I had signed up for sixth hour -- I was taking Physical Science and, because I was interested in chemistry and in performing "scientific experiments," I planned to enjoy myself, in spite of the fact that I was at school. As I made my way to Room 114, my spirits lifted for the first time that day.

I stepped into the classroom and, without looking up, made my way to the desk in the back corner next to the window. This was my customary seat -- in it I felt as unobtrusive as a 5'4", 175 lb. teenager can feel. It made me less nervous to be far away from the teacher and out of the line of vision of the other students, who seemed to me to be tall and slim and beautiful and always eager to laugh at a misfit.

I placed my books beneath the desk and then took the opportunity to quietly scan my surroundings to see who had taken the seats near me. To my delight, I found that the nearest person to me was three desks away, in front. No one else had taken a seat on the back row; it was a small class. So

I felt almost alone, especially if I turned sideways in my desk to look out the window at the sky. I was pleased; things were going well so far.

Examining the room, I saw that it was like public school classrooms must be all over the world -- a little run down, with a rusty, clanking radiator running the length of one of the plain block walls, which were painted with olive-drab army-surplus paint. Curtainless windows emitted colorless sunlight that failed to fully illuminate the shadowy corners in which the ghosts of dunces sat and waited. In addition, this room contained paraphernalia peculiar to science classrooms: black counters along one wall, with narrow, deep sinks every few feet, and glass cabinets above filled with an odd assortment of scientific-looking equipment. There was also a large walk-in closet in the back, not far from where I sat, probably for the storage of even more equipment.

Some time passed, and the classroom became nearly full of laughing students, none of whom were bold enough to sit near me. Then the bell rang signalling the beginning of class; the noise level dropped considerably, but remained at a steady hum. Several more minutes passed, in which there was no sign of a teacher. I began to grow restless, and turned in my desk to look out of the grimy window beside me. Just then, my attention was focused on the slowly opening door of the closet near me. As it gradually creaked open, every eye in the room came to be trained on it in delicious half-frightened anticipation. Finally it swung open enough for us to see what was apparently our teacher standing in the dim doorway. To say that I was shocked would be an understatement; my heart sank at the sight of him.

With his wild, thinning hair, huge bobbing Adam's-apple, black horn-rimmed spectacles with one leg held in place with electrical tape, and his stick-like body, he was a living caricature of a mad scientist. He was dressed all in black: baggy black trousers, a black turtleneck sweater (in spite of the ninety-plus temperature outside) from which his scrawny neck protruded obscenely, and a shapeless black jacket, shiny with age and grease. He trembled slightly as he surveyed the class, causing an unbelievably long finger of ash to fall from the cigarette which hung loosely from his long, thin hand.

Of course, my fellow students could not restrain themselves from a purely justifiable giggle or two. I was torn between pity, loathing, and gratitude that there existed in the world a creature even more ridiculous than myself. I think it was at that very moment that my life became inex-

tricably tangled in the spell of that strange little man.

With droll dignity, he held up a thin hand for silence. Reluctantly, the classroom quieted, and with what I soon came to recognize as a characteristic gesture, our teacher introduced himself.

Placing one foot atop the radiator and running a hand through the thin strands of hair on top of his head, he said in a strained, reedy voice: "I am Professor Conrad. You may call me the Doctor."

Another titter ran through the classroom at his austere delivery of such apparently serious information, rendering it ridiculous. But a look of stern disapproval quickly laid the merrymaking to rest.

I am sure that you find me extremely comical; nevertheless, I will expect a modicum of courtesy and respect be extended me, in the form of attention to my speech and obedience to my classroom rules. All I ask of you is that you appear in class with reasonable regularity, and that you keep relatively quiet so that I can rest. In return for your cooperation in these matters, I will allow you virtually free reign; there will be no homework assignments, and only such tests and seatwork as are necessary to maintain the illusion of a studious environment. I trust that this arrangement will be agreeable to all concerned?" He cast a doleful eye around the classroom, studying each face in turn. As he received no reply other than a general nodding of heads and murmur of surprised assent, he slowly strode to the desk placed at an angle in one corner of the room, took his seat, and balanced his chin upon his interlaced fingers. As he passed close by my desk, I caught an unpleasant whiff of him, the sour smell of unwashed age mingled with the sharper odors of tobacco and gin.

For a long time, no one said a word. The other kids just sat looking at one another stupidly. But gradually, teenage nature prevailed, and a steady, almost unnoticeable hum of speech began to rise from the groups of three or four clustered about the classroom. I, of course, sat alone, mutely puzzling over this strange new thing which had entered my life and impatiently awaiting the end of the hour. Finally, the bell rang its signal for the end of school, and the students all charged from their seats and out the door. I was the last one out. The Doctor's bleared voice stopped me at the door.

"Please close the door on your way out, young man," he said wearily. I complied, then gratefully took my leave and rushed to the schoolbus, feel-



ing happier and lighter than I had all day in spite of my encounter with the Doctor.

Thus began my relationship with the Doctor; an unusual beginning for an unusual story. (Or perhaps it only seems strange in retrospect.) I must confess that, although I was as glad as any other student in that class to be exempt from the usual tiresome burden of work associated with school, I was a little disappointed to find that he really intended to teach us nothing at all about chemistry. He simply sat at his desk each day for an hour, after making his usual appearance from within the storage closet, and disinterestedly watched us perform the rites and rituals of puberty. Most of the students ignored the freedom he sarcastically gave us to use the school equipment for our own experiments, but I braved a bitter ridicule by entertaining myself with experiments from my science textbook.

I think it was my insistence not to be what he expected me to be that first drew the Doctor's attention to me. After a few weeks of maintaining his stony and morose silence while watching me, he began to greet me each day, first calling me only "young man," later asking my name and making an effort to use it. This in itself was a peculiar honor, since he seldom if ever addressed anyone by name.

He began gradually to change his habitual attitude toward me, spending time assisting me with experiments and giving me private lectures in my out-of-the-way corner of the classroom. "Peter, look at this," he would say, holding up a beaker of pale greenish liquid. "Do you realize that if you evaporated this solution, you'd have a residue of copper ore?" he'd ask, with the nearest thing to enthusiasm I ever saw lighting his eyes. For the most part, the others left us alone, although occasionally some of the more studious (or curious) would surreptitiously watch us from a distance. But generally, the Doctor and I were alone, drawn together ostensibly by our similar interest in chemistry, but really by our almost identically low esteem in the eyes of others.

In this time I spent with him, I grew even more aware of the eccentricities of the Doctor. I considered his private tutelage a mixed blessing; I was glad to learn from him and flattered by the attention, but somewhat embarrassed to be chosen as his friend. I began to draw even more jeers from my fellow-students, as if my association with this known weirdo only confirmed my own eccentricities. Still, I rather liked the Doctor in spite of (or because of) his idiosyncrasies and the troubles they caused me. There were many mysteries about him that troubled me; I could see good qualities in the man even though these were almost obscured by his numerous faults. For one thing, he obviously had a serious drinking problem; he frequently

staggered to class. Then, too, his classroom habits were, to say the least, unusual. It struck me as odd that I had never heard anything about Dr. Conrad before. Even my own brother had taken his class, and had suggested that I take it also, without once revealing what I could expect. Certainly the school administration was unaware of how he ran his classroom; otherwise, I am sure they would have put a stop to it. There seemed to be a carefully guarded secret, kept by a network of student spies who warned the Doctor if the principal or any of his minions were in the area. Upon receiving such a warning, the Doctor would swiftly remove a stack of dummy worksheets from his drawer, pass them around, and instruct us to look busy. The principal would come in, scrutinize us all narrowly, then speak a few words to the Doctor about an upcoming faculty meeting or some other school business. Then he would leave, the Doctor would take up the papers, and it would be back to business as usual.

The principal, of course, was not without suspicion concerning the Doctor. But he could never seem to catch him doing anything irregular. At any rate, the school was proud to have such an obviously well-educated and erudite individual on the staff—it is not often that rural junior high schools are able to hire Ph.D.'s at such a low salary. But Dr. Conrad seemed to have little need of material wealth. Most of his money apparently went into purchasing the little bottles he kept stored behind the chemicals in the glass cabinet above his desk.

Eccentricity breeds rumor, and so rumors abounded among the students and other faculty members. Many a lunch period was spent in the cafeteria discussing his many possible antecedents over cartons of chocolate milk. Some speculated that he was a famous nuclear physicist on the run from the CIA because he "knew too much." Others went so far as to say he had sold his secrets to the Russians and was thus a traitor to our flag. There is no way to tell how much of these stories was based on fact, but certainly he behaved as if he had some secret, although probably of a much more mundane nature. Most of the rumors circulated were more obvious, centering on his drinking and his disregard for conventional dress and behavior. All these things contributed to my conception of him as bizarre and somehow very special, and increased my equal compulsions of affection and anxiety toward him.

As my affection for the Doctor increased to eclipse my distaste, my acceptance of him grew. I came to see him as the deeply troubled individual he was, rather than as a mere comic curiosity. It may seem strange that at thirteen I was able to recognize so deep and adult an emotion as despair, but even at that young age I was well acquainted with its many faces. And his drinking, a source of amusement for the other students, touched me par-

ticularly, as it was no stranger to me. My own father was an alcoholic, temporarily dry at the time, and so the Doctor's symptoms and behavior were almost as familiar to me as my father's.

So my sense of kinship with the Doctor was intensified as the weeks wore on. Still, to all appearances, our relationship was nothing more than that of teacher and student. At the time, I felt no real bonds with him other than human sympathy and a child-like, and therefore passing, affection. It is only in looking at my life since that I realize the profound influence, for good or ill, that he has had in my life. But this influence is related to later events, and must be explained more fully.

Being in almost daily contact with the Doctor, it was impossible for me to ignore his steady deterioration. In September, he had been a slightly seedy drinker; by November, he had become, to my eyes, a disgusting drunk. His slightly unkempt appearance had grown gradually worse, until finally he was so dirty and smelly that he could not fail to attract attention. His drinking at school grew more frequent, open, and heavy, and very often he would not appear in class at all.

It was on one such day, when the Doctor failed to show up for class, that I made an interesting discovery in the storage closet. I was searching for a bottle of zinc chips that I knew was kept in the room, and decided to risk looking in the storage closet even though I knew it had been declared off-limits. Pushing open the heavy fire-proof door, I entered the dim, dusty room and groped about for the wall-switch opposite the door. Upon finding it, I flicked on the light to reveal, to my surprise, that the storeroom was set up as a living quarters of sorts. Next to the sink was a razor, a toothbrush in a glass, and a hairbrush. Shapeless black clothes slumped on a straight-backed chair. And upon a cot pushed against the far wall, the Doctor lay in the deep, stuporous sleep of drunkenness. I was overwhelmed by repulsion and anger; I turned and fled the room, managing to maintain enough presence of mind to close the door firmly behind me. I looked fearfully around me to see if the other students had noticed my hasty retreat from the storage closet, and was gratified to see that, as usual, they had paid no attention to me.

I took my seat, dazed and astonished, and began to ponder what I had seen. Eventually I came to the uneasy conclusion that the Doctor was either living in that closet, or had set up a sort of "lounge" for himself. Judging from the appearance of the room, the former seemed the more likely case. Instinct directed me to continue on the same terms as before with the Doctor, and to mention what I had seen neither to him nor to anyone else. Un-



comfortable with this resolve, but determined to carry it out, I strove to put the entire episode out of my mind.

In the next few weeks, an even swifter decay seemed evident in the Doctor. His demeanor changed rapidly from a reticent friendliness to an almost hostile sharpness. Although I regretted the loss of our former closeness, I recognized from subtle signals that his behavior was no reflection of a personal dislike; he was merely suffering from the effects of his more prolonged spells of drunkenness and depression. I, a mere child, was totally unequipped to deal with the trauma I could see my friend was going through; in all honesty, I was not really very concerned about him. At thirteen, there are many things more important to us than the health and happiness of science teachers.

Nevertheless, my daily contacts with him, as they grew uglier and more trying, I came to regard as my duty, something I was compelled to get through as a matter of principle. Undoubtedly, there was some deep-seated transference of affection and responsibility from my alcoholic father to this frail and sickly old man that forced me into a position of such devotion, so natural to me as to go almost completely unnoticed.

The next few weeks were an extended countdown to the Christmas holiday. Like all kids, I looked forward to the time away from school, and eagerly anticipated the gifts I would receive, taking for granted the effortless joy of the season. As the final day of classes neared, I found myself drifting further and further away from the Doctor, who seemed to be sinking to some final depth of seediness and morbidity. His previous attitude of trust and companionship toward me had now been wholly replaced by the suspicious hostility of the paranoid drunk. I was hurt, but the general good feeling of the holiday season served to lessen the wound considerably, and on the last day of class I approached his desk to wish him a happy Christmas.

"Yes, Peter, what do you want this time?" he snapped at me, glaring from red, watery eyes at my suddenly cold and sweaty form.

"I...I just wanted to say Merry Christmas, and goodbye 'til next year," I replied shakily, embarrassed.

"Yes, well, that's all very nice, but I haven't time for any of that sentimental clap-trap." He sprang with unexpected energy from his chair and



strode across the empty classroom to his closet, but not before I saw the look of remorse on his haggard face.

\* \* \* \* \*

Christmas was cool and bright and full of the standard cheer and good will. I enjoyed my best Christmas in years, with my father sober and my mother more relaxed than I ever remembered seeing her. But the holiday was not without troubling thoughts of the Doctor.

As was traditional in my family, my brother and I each received one large, expensive gift and a few little things on the side. My brother got a stereo and some albums; I got a terrific chemistry set, complete with a microscope.

I was thrilled with my gift, of course, but my happiness was marred by thoughts of the Doctor. I was sorry that our parting had been so bitter, and wondered uneasily how he was spending his Christmas. An ugly vision of his squalid closet dwelling filled my mind. Preoccupied with my imaginings, I was unable to fully enjoy my delicious Christmas dinner, until I came to a resolution. I decided to pack a basket of food and take it to the Doctor at school.

With my new resolve firmly in mind, I finished my dinner with renewed appetite, then excused myself. Impatiently, I waited for the rest of the family to clear out of the kitchen, then rushed in to select a few things for the Doctor.

First of all, I filled a jar with some of Mom's delicious turkey dressing and packed some sliced turkey in a plastic bag. Then, I filled another jar with green beans, grown in our garden the previous summer and lovingly preserved. I cut a thick slab of fruit cake (sent to us by my great-aunt Sarah) and a wedge of pumpkin pie (which I didn't like in the first place). Finally, I poured the rest of the egg-nog into my thermos bottle. All these things I carefully packed in my green canvas knapsack, along with two paper plates, cups, and plastic dinnerware. I hesitated a moment, then added the bottle of brandy given to us by an unknowing neighbor—Mom had wanted to throw it away, so I didn't think she'd miss it.

When everything was packed and ready, I ran upstairs to tell my brother where I was going. Without revealing the Doctor's secret, I simply explained that I was going to ride over to the school on my bike and meet some friends to discuss our Christmases together. If he found anything unusual in my story, he didn't let on, but only nodded in time to the music

blaring out of his new stereo. As I left, I heard my father yell out at him: "Turn that blasted thing down a little, can't you, Davey?" I felt safe as I mounted my bike, my knapsack bulging with goodies and my new chemistry set snugly tucked into the wire basket over the back wheel.

As I slowly pedaled my bike toward school, I found myself anxious to see the Doctor, but half-fearful of his reaction. Then I began to speculate that he wouldn't even be there. Surely the man had a family of his own, I thought to myself. I realized then that I very much wanted to see him that night, and to show him my new prized possession. I knew he'd be pleased.

I recognize now that I was then full to the bursting point of misplaced pride in my own good samaritanism. I know it was selfish of me to think that way, but I couldn't help wanting to be the Doctor's sole friend and comforter in his misery.

As I drew nearer the school, my heart grew lighter and I began to pedal faster, humming snatches of Christmas carols under my breath. In every house along the street, brightly colored lights winked in the windows. Although there was no snow, the air was crisply, cleanly cold, and in the night sky the stars displayed their own pale, twinkling decorations.

At last I arrived at school. It looked odd in the moonlight; black shadows lurked beside every ordinary thing, investing the usually commonplace scene with unnatural terrors. I had never seen the school so absolutely devoid of life before. As I crept along the silent, ghostly corridors, I felt the unreasoning cold hand of fear gripping mine, urging me to turn back; I almost did. But something persuaded me to go on even though my heart was pounding, and finally I arrived at the door of Room 114.

A sudden wild thought came to me as if a certainty: the door would be locked. I hastily gripped the icy metal doorknob, turned it, and pushed. I was surprised when it opened easily. I stumbled inside the eerily-lit classroom and started for the wall-switch. Just before switching on the lights, I realized that they would be seen, and I might possibly be discovered prowling around the school on Christmas night. So, fearful of having to explain my actions (even to myself), I crept along in semi-darkness toward the closet door, listening eagerly for any sounds from within. When I reached the door, I stood a moment with a hand on the knob, wondering if even now I shouldn't just turn around and go back home. I looked at the luminous dial of my Timex: 8:05. Shaking off my nerves, I turned the doorknob hard and pushed against the heavy door with my shoulder. This time, it was locked. Impatient, unwilling to knock but having come too far to turn back, I rattled the knob softly, trying in vain to get the door to open.

Then, suddenly feeling the weight of my picnic-Christmas dinner on my back, I did knock, and loudly.

Excitement gripped me; there I was, standing in the middle of the deserted school on Christmas night, knocking like a fiend on the door of my mad-scientist teacher. Growing even more eager and anxious, I began to call his name: "Doctor! Doctor Conrad, it's me, Peter. Please let me in!"

Finally, I heard the lock click on the inside of the door. Then the heavy metal door began to swing open, incredibly slowly, to reveal the spectral image of the Doctor, looking half-wild with drink and loneliness, I fancied.

Clutching my new chemistry set against my jacket with one arm and holding out the heavy canvas knapsack with the other, I grinned hugely and blurted, "Merry Christmas!"

I stood facing him expectantly. After a long silence, during which my grin seemed to crack and fall from my face, he finally spoke. "O, for Christ's sake, what the hell are you doing here?" he cried out, running a bony hand through his disheveled hair. "Am I never to be rid of you? God! It's like some kind of nightmare; everywhere I turn, I see these damned weirdo kids hanging onto me like parasites! What is it you want from me, anyway? What is it you want me to do?" Not waiting for an answer, he began again. "I'm not what you think I am, kid. Why don't you just get the hell out of here and leave me alone, you damned little twerp. Go on, get out!" And reaching out his long, thin arms, he gave me a rough shove, sending me crashing backwards, the full knapsack and precious chemistry set following.

Stunned and stricken, I sat on the floor for a long moment, looking up at him through my tears. Seeing no remorse, but only a cruel, hard, scowling stare, I got shakily to my feet and gathered up my scattered belongings, biting back the sobs that threatened to break from my mouth. Picking up the chemistry set box, I heard the unmistakable clank of broken glass and, unable to hold it back any longer, I let out a short but expressive wail of grief and hurt. The Doctor made a disgusted grunting noise, then retreated into his room, slamming the heavy door behind him decisively.

I was not physically hurt, but I found it very difficult to get home that night. When I finally got back, it was after ten o'clock, and my mom and dad were furious. Apparently my undependable brother had failed to tell them where I was going, because they had been worried when they found I wasn't at home. Seeing the crushed box under my arm and the gravy-soaked knapsack on my back, they were even more furious, demanding to



know where I'd been, what had happened. Of course, I lied. I couldn't even admit to myself that my beloved Doctor Conrad had so humiliated me, smashing my new chemistry set in the process. So, I told them that I'd been taking my present and some dinner leftovers to meet some friends, and that on the way home I'd had a spill on my bike. They were still plenty mad that the expensive gift had been ruined, and when they found the bottle of brandy, remarkably still intact, inside my knapsack, I received the only serious spanking of my life. But I hardly even felt it; my mind was on other things.

As I sat in my room some time later, trying to forget what had happened, I heard a group of carolers pause beneath my window, singing a cracked version of "Silent Night." Only with great difficulty did I refrain from screaming at them from my window to go away; instead, I merely lay on my bed and cried, sure that if I never left my room again it would be best for all concerned.

\* \* \* \* \*

I was sufficiently calm to feel sheepish as I returned to school in January. I dreaded intensely having to face Doctor Conrad again; the best I could hope for was that he would have forgotten the entire episode. As I sat in my customary seat in the left rear corner, I watched the closet door from the corner of my eye, fearing the moment when it would open. But to my surprise, it never did; instead, the principal walked into the room, a grim but uncertain look on his face, holding up a hand for silence.

He gripped the lapels of his jacket and rocked back on his heels, surveying our puzzled faces equably. I glared at him ferociously, trying to penetrate his air of simpering self-importance to discover his reason for being before me. After a long silence, he cleared his throat and finally spoke.

"Students, I have an unhappy announcement to make. Doctor Conrad will not be returning to this class. I'm afraid he's....dead...."

By the time I got home that afternoon, my shock had worn off, leaving cold fury in its place. In fury I rushed up to my room, heedless of the words flung at me by my still-angry mother; bitterly, I swept the fragments of my chemistry set, which lay in various stages of amateurish repair on my desk, to the floor; then, more calmly, I transferred the shattered pieces to my wastebasket. Flinging myself to my bed, I refused to cry; I simply lay there, teeth and fists clenched in rage and frustration. I no longer cared if my parents were angry with me, and I no longer wanted that chemistry set.

Doctor Conrad had no power over me, no real influence in my life.



Once again, my loneliness and insecurities have inflicted on me a distorted view of the past. His only value is assigned in my own morbid and restless rememberings. Nothing in him or his sad, ignoble end could possibly have changed me.

....Except that four years later, when my father began drinking again, I found that I couldn't deal with it and left home, never to speak to the old man again. And that, although I was still intensely interested in the sciences at college, I instead took courses in the humanities and now work as a private psychologist. And that, even now, when things are bad I am inclined to turn away from those I love and to a bottle for comfort and release.

But no, nothing ever really changes. The events of childhood are always exaggerated in memory. The wounds heal.

Vicki Hill

## ONCE

I loved you  
- Once -  
As you walked so  
tall and majestically  
towards me,  
- one day -

You loved me  
- Once -  
As the bud's break forth  
from their shells,  
their first  
feel of life  
- only Once -

I loved you  
- Once -  
As the river,  
like glass,  
moves over  
sparkling sand  
never to pause  
- just once -

You loved me  
- Once -

As water  
trickles over  
withered bark,  
half dead  
as your love,  
for me.

I might have  
wished you back  
- Once -  
but the love  
you had for me  
is like a rock  
frozen  
to the river sand,  
- smothered -

Never again  
will you  
hold your head  
majestically high  
and walk toward me,  
- not Once -

By Mary Howard

## FOR THE SANTIAGOS OF OUR TIME

Despite our bodies' curvature  
Our minds stand straight and still endure.  
Throughout the years spent on this land  
We learn to love; we understand  
Each other...links of fastened chain  
United we remain.

We live a half-barren loneliness.  
We cry, we search for happiness,  
For hollow is our inner core—

Our bodies house a missing door.  
But flee we do from this strange pain;  
Part—strangers we remain.

Dimensions of Life's Plentitude  
Take in all virtues—fair and crude.  
This is the circle of our lives  
That totals happiness and strife.  
We live the same; we die the same.  
Our souls receive no fame.

To reconcile with this Nothingness  
May seem to make us much distress,  
But aren't we all old men at sea?  
We are, at least we seem to be.  
We need not know where life came;  
Our souls receive no fame.

What price our Loving? What price the Pain?  
While together still our souls lose fame,  
The Answers lie in what we see  
As long as we live for Humanity...  
For when we die, we no longer be.


By Michel






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If you are interested in working on the 1987 *Calliope* staff, or in submitting work for consideration in that edition, please contact Dr. Richard Raymond in the Department of Languages, Literature, and Dramatic Arts, 115 D, Gamble Hall. *Calliope* welcomes prose, poetry, and nonfiction work in all fields, as well as photographs and sketches. All pieces submitted must be the work of students, staff, or faculty members of Armstrong State College. Work should be submitted by the end of Fall Quarter for best chance of publication. Please be sure that your name, phone number, and address accompany each submission.

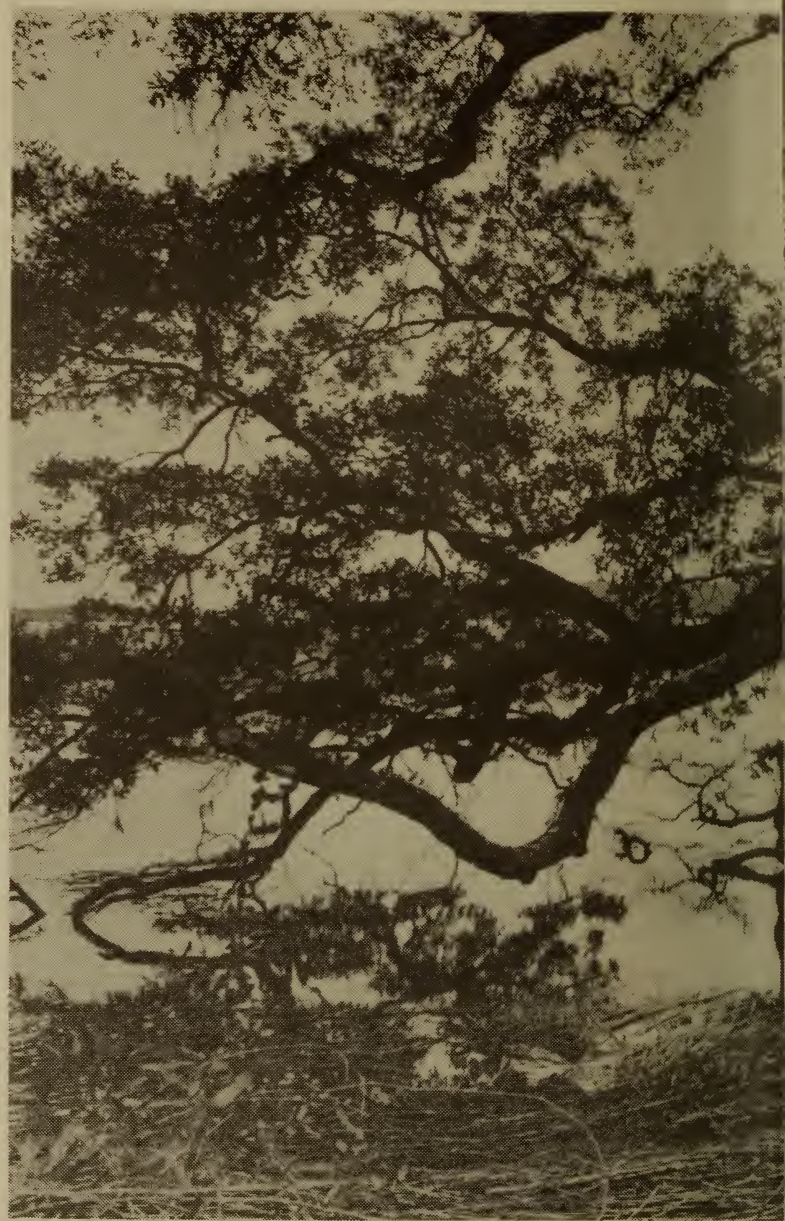


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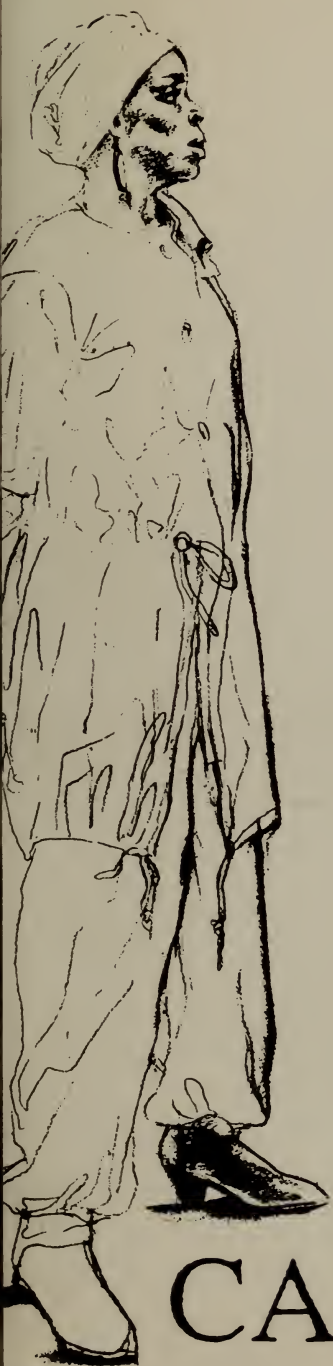
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CALLIOPE

1987



*for James Land Jones*  
1934 - 1986

*cover by Mojo Davis*



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# CALLIOPE

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Spring 1987

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As always, it has been a pleasure working with the quality materials and cooperative people associated with this magazine. We only regret that not everything submitted could be printed.

We are grateful for the beneficence of the Lillian and Frank W. Spencer Foundation for making the award for best *Calliope* submission possible.

We respectfully dedicate this edition of *Calliope* to the memory of our friend and teacher, Dr. James Land Jones.

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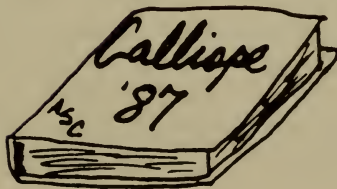
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## ISAAC BEEMER

*Jeff Gordon Peebles*

Once I had a friend. But we went to different colleges after high school, and I knew nothing would be the same. Now I am alone; a dissected "we."

Isaac Beemer closed his brown spiral-ring journal and placed the cap on the felt tip marker. He ran his hand through his curly black hair and across his slender, unshaven face in an attempt at motivation. His morning free-time had passed, and if he didn't hurry, he would not be in his first period classroom ten minutes early.

"Always be punctual, Isaac," his mother had told him when she straightened his tie, as if the Greyhound bus fare were less expensive for immaculate dressers. "And try to find a decent synagogue," she tried to whisper above the shouts of the boarding passengers. His Catholic father had heard her anyway, but had merely winked at Isaac, shrugged his shoulders, and said, "A mother's advice is not to be tampered with." Once at school, Isaac, the freshman, had conveniently forgotten the last half of the counsel, but religiously held to the former.

For this reason, he shut his journal even though he wanted to continue writing. "You will write?" Michael, the object of his current passage, had asked him with a handshake at the graduation ceremonies.

"You'll get a letter from me every week. I promise."

"I'm not talkin' about letters, man. I mean write. You know, like a writer writes. You've got to keep up with it. You've got it, man."

That was another piece of advice, and in the early morning hours before first period class he fought to uphold it, for Michael's sake more than anything else.

Usually Isaac rode the bus to school, but as he put on his pleated gray tweed pants and white oxford shirt, the bicycle which now served as a hat and clothes rack in the living room demanded, in what seemed to be Michael's voice, an exposure to the October air. As he rode from his small, rain-washed duplex apartment to the campus, he thought of his parents and of Michael and of everything he had left behind to attend the cheapest college in

the state. He glanced back only once as if Michael were behind him, racing. He pedaled harder and harder, burying his face in the pages of the wind. He felt slight twinges of pain down his skinny thighs and between his jutting shoulder blades, but he pedaled still harder, hoping to be the first student in the classroom, the first one to define his territory.

When Isaac turned from the hallway into Room 213 of Connor Hall, he felt terribly awkward; he was not the first student in the room. The tall, slender girl with porcelain skin and hair like hay bundled in a braid behind her head had already staked her claim, marking her boundaries with her large straw pocket book and gingham book bag. Her paisley skirt, spread over the entire width of the seat, completely hid her legs, only exposing her tiny ankles and, in brown sandals, the most slender, the whitest feet, like those of the doll he was forbidden to touch in his grandmother's china closet. Isaac sat down in the very back chair on the left side of the room, ran his fingers over his dark black curls, and stared for what he knew must have been two or three days. She did not look up, but continued to read her pages and pages of yellow notepaper through her round-frame, gold-wire glasses. In a mousy voice she said, "I saw Dr. Gillawater earlier; she should be in any minute." Isaac only stared. The girl, this pale sliver of life, had been in class before, but he had never been alone with her.

Dr. Gillawater arrived ten minutes late that day. She murdered her cigarette in the ashtray at the door, heaved a portfolio onto the desktop, and laid her notes on the lectern. Isaac thought how much she looked like a gloomy elf with her short, paunchy body and white, boyish haircut with straight bangs. After a few minutes of deliberation she began the psychology class. The session covered the young adult stage of life, and Dr. Gillawater spoke as if the spirit of the stage had fallen back into the cobwebbed crannies of her psyche. Her face contorted itself periodically to accomodate her false teeth.

Isaac didn't listen for long. He began scribbling on his notepaper, dreaming of home and feeling cold. Occasionally, he looked at the girl with the white feet. She seemed about as interested in the class as he was, but continued to make notes on the yellow paper. Once she glanced his way, and he thought that if she had looked a moment longer, he would have seen her smile.

Not until he cleared his books off the desk did he see it on the wooden desktop, etched between obscenities and memoirs of forgotten lovers:

*"ARE YOU LONELY?"*

He looked for Dr. Gillawater's eyes of authority. She had already left the class. He took his pen and carefully wrote beneath the question:

*"YES, I AM."*



Isaac's schedule endowed him with two periods of "profitable study time" between his psychology class and his next class, history. This period of time was the longest of the day. He rarely used the time to study; he studied during the long night hours that seemed to smother him in darkness. Sometimes he occupied his free periods writing. Usually he spent the time in restless limbo, ambling around campus, waiting for class. Today he found himself in the library.

For Isaac, the library was a fascinating place. With its plush easy chairs and rich variety of magazines, videos, and microfilm, the building was a frequent refuge for him, a time-killer's fantasy. He walked past the plexiglass sound-proof rooms to the book stacks.

The girl in Psychology class was named Reba -- Reba Hartley. He discovered that by investigating a yearbook from the year before. He stared at the picture for a while before returning the book to its shelf.

He went to the bookstore to find a card for Michael but found nothing he wanted or could afford. The only customer in the store, he felt awkward walking out without making a purchase. He picked up a long, pink eraser and set it on the counter in front of the lady with a bleached-blond beehive. "That'll be forty cents, honey." The coins danced across the counter. "What's your name, darlin'?" she asked between smacks of gum and register rings.

"Pardon?" Isaac blushed.

"I said, 'what's your name?' I haven't seen you around here before."

"Isaac. I'm a freshman."

"Isaac. Cute name." She ran her eyes down the length of his lean body and back up again. "Jewish?"

"Half." The plastic bag felt slippery between his fingers.

"Take it easy, Isaac Freshman." She winked. "Come back and see us." She patted her hair and snapped her gum. Once outside the door, Isaac threw the bag away and crammed the eraser into his pocket.

Isaac wandered Connor Hall down vacant corridors, absorbing bits and pieces of lectures. He read the announcements on the bulletin board; he straightened his hair in the reflection of a display cabinet; he walked to one end of the hall and sipped water from the water cooler. A half hour later he left Connor Hall and went to the cafeteria.

Isaac stumbled through the back entrance and examined the crowd. Often he would come here and watch, hoping to find characters he could write about someday. No heads turned when Isaac entered the room, and no heads turned as he walked between the tables of the music majors ("Are you sure about that? I thought it was 'La la lala la la dee...'"), the English majors ("Of course 'Mending Wall' shows a repression of homosexual tendencies..." "That's the most ridi--" "It's all Oedipal..."), and the education students ("The discipline stuff they teach you never works when you get into student teaching..." "I know; Piaget never taught a class...."). All of the tables were closed in chattering circles except one in the far front of the building. It was

empty. He continued to meander through the crowd of handsome hunks and their beautiful leeches as he approached the table.

He was almost there when Reba entered from another direction and settled down at the table with her straw pocket book and gingham book bag. Isaac backed away. He turned in search of another table, but only one other wasn't filled -- the table where Dr. Gillawater sat staring out the window, drinking her soup, her teeth on a napkin by her bowl. She seemed as morbid now as she had in first period. Isaac went back to the library and re-read his history assignment in a sealed sound-proof room.

He didn't write the next morning. He lay in bed, thinking. "You will write?" He could feel Michael's words scratching at his chest. "You will write?" He pulled the sheet over his head. "You will write?" I can't write, Michael. I don't have anything to write about. I'm not doing anything; I don't have a soul to talk to. I wake up in the morning, come to school, go home and watch the paint peel. I can't even find a job. What am I supposed to be writing about? Romance? Lots of chances for that: a woman in the bookstore winked at me yesterday. I'm just like you; girls just fall at my feet. There are no new people in my life since I left home. Except ---

Reba was the first student in psychology the next morning, although Dr. Gillawater's portfolio occupied the first seat. He took his seat in the back and watched her. She polished her glasses and organized her notes.

He was opening his text for class when he saw it -- a continuation of yesterday's conversation.

*"ARE YOU LONELY?"*

*"YES, I AM."*

Then the following:

*"I KNOW THE FEELING. I'VE WATCHED YOU."*

Isaac added:

*"THE WHOLE WORLD'S LONELY."*

The following day, he checked his desktop and found another message:

*"WANTED: ONE FRIEND."*

He put his pen tip on the desktop to add something to the string of correspondences, but he couldn't think of anything to write.

"Loneliness." The word from the lecture knocked his head upward. "Today we will be discussing this phenomenon of the young adult stage of life." Dr. Gillawater's steadfast expression of disinterest remained, but for the first time during the quarter she left the lectern while speaking. "Recently, I flew alone to a convention on various aspects and contemporary issues in psychology. I was amazed by the alarming statistics on loneliness in America. According to leading psychologists, the population most confronted with loneliness is the eighteen to twenty-five age range. I would like to hear your opinions on this."

Isaac wasn't sure if she really wanted their opinions or if her dentures were slipping and silence was her only choice. No one in the class breathed. A boy with a ruddy complexion and thick arms was the first to speak. "I can see where they're coming from. I mean, sometimes you just feel by yourself." He paused and shook his head. "I mean, like sometimes I come to school, go to work, go home, go to school. It's a cycle I go through. I don't have a lot of time to make friends. You know what I mean?"

"That is the biggest joke I've ever heard," laughed a girl with a blond ponytail. "The only reason these people..."

"What people?" Gillawater interrupted.

"These people that say they're so lonely. The only reason they're lonely is that they never do anything. If they'd get out and do something -- get involved with a club or something -- they wouldn't be so lonely."

"Isn't it possible to be lonely even if you belong to a group?" Isaac looked at Reba, the student who was always first in class, as she spoke. She took her gold-wire glasses from her eyes and placed them on her desktop. "I've been lonely in a crowd. The real reason people are so lonely isn't because they're not involved in stupid programs. The reason is that there are so few caring people around. And those of us who do have a little compassion, a little love, a little caring for the human spirit," her voice wasn't mousy anymore, "are too scared to reach out to other people in the same situation."

Isaac ran his bony fingers over the chain of words etched in his desk top and smiled.

As soon as class was over, Isaac left his books under his desk and followed Reba. In the hall, Isaac tried to speak. He succeeded in making a very loud "um" which turned not only Reba's head but the heads of two other girls and a basketball player. Isaac approached Reba; he stood remarkably close to her -- so close he could see the small wrinkles in the corners of her eyes, just behind the gold rims.

"I liked what you said today."

"Thanks." Her voice was mousy again. "It just makes me mad to hear people cut other people down that way. I know what it's like to be alone."

They both stood there a minute; then he looked down at his penny



loafers. "Well, I just wanted to tell you that I really was behind you today."

"Thanks. It's not as simple as everybody thinks; good friends are hard to come by." He was sure he saw her smile. "I've seen you in the cafeteria before. I started to speak, but..."

"Yeh. It's a place I frequent occasionally." He played with a ravel that hung from his shirt and thought of his stupidity.

"Well, I'll see you tomorrow." Reba walked away.

"Listen," he said hoarsely as she left. "Would you like to have lunch today? I mean with me. I'm usually in the cafeteria around noon."

"I'll see you then." She definitely smiled.

Isaac hit the air with his fist and laughed out loud as soon as Reba was out of sight. Finally he had found someone. Was he jumping to conclusions? Well, at least he had someone with whom he could share lunch. He felt like he was swelling inside, as if he would emerge from his skin as if it were a cocoon at any minute.

He went back into the room to get his books. He was embarrassed to go back in at first, but no one was there. No one was there except Dr. Gillawater, sitting in the corner, writing on a desktop.





## RIVERS RUN

Rivers run on beaches too.  
People drift along the shore  
seeking answers in the sand,  
finding shells instead.

Lovers wander by, bodies close together,  
touching tightly in the evening air.  
Someone stands looking long toward Europe,  
waves tugging incessantly at his toes.

A family follows its smallest member,  
who gallops ahead, then back, then forward again.  
An old black dog bounds beside her,  
a child too.

Generations pass in silence,  
windswept wonder in their walk.  
The same waves return.  
Rivers run on beaches too.

*David Kelley*

## SAME - SAME

*Rebekah Cheh*

"Re-be-kah," Mamma yells from the kitchen downstairs. Her voice rumbles through the house. "What now?" I think to myself. When she calls me Rebekah, something is wrong. I've already fed the cats and dogs, washed the dishes and taken the trash out. What more is there? I bet you she wants me to fix Junnie a glass of tea. Well, I won't do it. He thinks just because he tells Mamma he's thirsty, I'll turn into his slave. Well, he's wrong! I'll tell him again, there is nothing wrong with his legs, so he can use them. I tell you, that brother of mine is so lazy he can put a Persian cat to shame. Good looking he may be, but no one could be as good looking as he thinks he is.

"Ma'am?" I say.

"Come down stairs now!" Mamma says. "Your brother tells me you wouldn't fix him a glass of tea. Is this true?" She towers over me.

"Yes Ma'am. He thinks he is the king of the castle, and I'm his servant."

"Stop that sassing, and fix your brother a glass of tea," Mamma says with a stern voice.

"Yes Ma'am." There was nothing else to do but say "yes Ma'am" and do what she told me.

Bet you're wondering how my brother got a name like Junnie. Well, it's all my fault. I didn't like the name Junior; that's what everybody called him. Too goofy sounding, don't you think? One night last fall, we were all together watching *Andy Griffith*, when Guber, one of the characters, was imitating Cary Grant saying "Judy, Judy, Judy." I changes Judy to Junnie, and it caught on like Sunday afternoon football. Junnie even liked the nickname.

"If you don't quit thumping me on the head, you're gonna be wearing this tea instead of drinking it," I swear to Junnie.

Ralph, a close friend of my brother's, has to get in his two cents' worth and says, "Spunky little sister you have there, Speedball." Speedball is another nickname of Junnie's, one his friends gave him. He likes this nickname, too.

"Can't wait till you and Ralph leave. What's taking ya'll so long?" I ask.

"If you didn't have so many mirrors, we would have been gone by

now," Ralph says with a smirky grin, looking right at Junnie. Tom even got a laugh out of that.

Tom, who had sauntered into the kitchen while I was pouring the tea, is my other brother, a year younger than Junnie and eight years older to the day than I. Tom once told his friends that I was the worst birthday present he ever got. I remember my tenth birthday Mamma threw Tom and me a party together. He had this bleached blonde for a date; that's all I can remember about the party: her white hair next to my Mamma's jet black hair. I wonder if that had anything to do with what Daddy said to Tom that night last week when they were arguing. Daddy said, "If I say the sky is blue, you would say it's black, and if I say I feel partial to the ocean, you would say you like the desert." Tom is an alright person. He just likes to argue.

Here we have the perfect family picture: Mamma in her smock and bare feet hovering over the stove making her and Daddy a cup of coffee; Daddy sitting at the kitchen table next to the full-length window reading the *Evening Press* and watching the six o'clock news simultaneously; socks, in ball form, flying across the kitchen, aimed at the wicker basket on top of the refrigerator and tossed by none other than the three musketeers, Junnie, Tom, and Ralph; and here I am stretched out, belly down on the floor, petting my dog, John Brown.

"Tom, what are you doing tonight?" Mamma asks.

"Not much. I thought I would ride around Krystal's for awhile and then maybe go to the beach," Tom answers.

Daddy breaks away from his paper and glares at Junnie to say, "Just make sure you're home by twelve. We've got a lot of work to do tomorrow. That goes for you, too, Fireball. "Fireball" is another nickname for Junnie that originated when he was working with a welding crew and caught his pants on fire.

"Tom, can I go with you for a little while?" I ask.

"What do you think?" he asks.

"I think yes."

"Well, you think wrong."

"It was worth a try. To get out of the house would be nice."

"And what is wrong with this house?" Mamma asks.

"Not a thing," I say. "Not a thing if you like being bored to death," I add under my breath. Tom opens the back door to let John Brown out. Junnie uses this opportunity for him and Ralph to make their escape. Then Tom decides to go while the going is good.

"Becky, where are you going?" Mamma asks.

"Nowhere except to bed," I answer. I don't have to worry about missing out on anything. "Good night, Mamma and Daddy."

"Sweet dreams, and don't let the bedbugs bite," Daddy says.

One thing about my family life is this: if you think you missed out on an event around here, just come over tomorrow. It happens all over again.







## **My dreams are balloons**

stuck on the ceiling  
losing air.

As

they

drop

I'll gather them up  
stuff them in my mouth  
chew on them awhile  
like a child  
just to feel their texture.

*Anna Mary Crowe Dewart*

## ASK AND YOU WILL RECEIVE

*Rita Black*

"Did that social worker tell you how long before your Ma can have this here heart operation?" The big black woman's coarse breathing and heavy footsteps punctuated each word.

The slender girl answered soberly. "Mr. Meeks says he'll push the paperwork through and maybe she'll be in the hospital by the Fourth of July."

"Child, that's three weeks. She needs that operation now."

"I know. I took him the doctor's letter. Mr. Meeks says he'll do his best."

"Have you thought about asking the Boss?"

"The Boss?" Glory questioned reverently. "I don't know, Bessie Mae."

"Glory Anne, you ain't afeared of him, is you?"

"No. No, course not." An image filled her mind; it was the Boss' shadowed face and seething eyes. She didn't want to go to the hilltop. She didn't want to talk with the Boss. "Bessie Mae, you being the nanny and seeing him every day and all -- well -- he just couldn't say no to you. Will you ask him for me?"

"You is scared." After looking into frightened green eyes, Bessie Mae's face melted into sympathy. "Don't know why I'm such an old softy." And the bulky woman steamed up the hill muttering about softheaded fools and muleheaded girls.

Alone, Glory continued to trudge up the dirt path. She didn't notice the powder-fine dust clinging to her bare toes and ankles, and settling on the hem of her cheap cotton sundress. Again, a picture of the Boss intruded into her thoughts. She had been within touching distance of him only once; a message had needed delivering, and she had been the chosen one. He was a slightly built man with a crown of golden hair. The sunlight spilled around his large fan-backed chair to shroud his face and body in darkness, making only his skyblue eyes discernible. The shiver that passed through her snapped the spell.

Shaking off the vision, she stopped to allow the cool river breeze to surround her thin body. She lifted her indian-brown face toward the sun, and closed her eyes against its brightness. The air, hot and muggy, wrapped around her like a blanket. It drained her strength. As she stood there, a fly circled her damp skin, only to be blown away by the next cooling breeze.

Seconds later, she detected the stench of her job. The smell of sweat-drenched bodies and the sour decayed fish and musky rivermarsh sat on the morning wind as it swirled throughout Beulah Isle. It was a small lush

island, supporting only a handful of workers. These workers farmed the water and supplied the outside world with seafood. Once a week they dug a hole to bury the shells and heads and guts of their catch. During the rest of the week, the remains fermented and the rotten smell hung over their heads.

Sighing, she began to move toward the squalid building sitting at the river's edge. A song was flowing from the unpainted factory:

Like a bird from prison bars have flown,  
I'll fly away (in the morning).  
When I die, hallelujah by and by,  
I'll fly away.

I'll fly away, oh glory,  
I'll fly away (in the morning).  
When I die, hallelujah by and by,  
I'll fly away.

Inside the hollow building, the voices blended in a strangely melodious sound, conjuring a vision of blue penetrating eyes within a shadowed face. The song surrounded her. And with her back erect, she entered the house of songs and odors.

Glory was lucky; heading shrimp was one of the cushy, better-paid jobs, reserved for the fastest workers. If her production fell, she would be shuffled into the boxline, toting crates across the room and into the walk-in freezer. The cold wet concrete under her feet gave relief from the burning airlessness that pervaded the tin-roofed building. The cotton sundress, already dark with moisture, clung uncomfortably around her hips and thighs. Her indigo hair, now fastened back, hung in a long damp rope down her back. Fine strands had escaped and formed a web on her cheeks and forehead. Every now and again she would blow with quick little breathe in a vain attempt to free her face. Her left arm was cramping, but she couldn't stop now. Hands that had long ago toughened kept a steady shrimphheader's pace. Without losing her rhythm, she swiped at her face with her shoulder, and tried to ignore the stiffness in her spine.

"Glory Anne, Glory honey, where are you?"

"Bessie Mae?"

When her steamroller stride came to a halt, Bessie Mae croaked in excitement, "The Boss, he done fixed everything. You take that old pickup and get your Ma to the hospital, and they going to operate on her tomorrow."

"You mean it? The Boss fixed it?"

"Yeah, and you'd best get a move on."

The next morning was fine and warm. Clouds floated in a brilliant blue sky, and birds darted to and fro. As she bounced up the road, each puff

of wind lifted her hair and nuzzled her heated body. Her Ma was having her operation today. Soon she would be home and well.

"Glory Anne, what you doing coming up this here road? You belongs with your Ma."

The young girl stopped long enough to wrap her arms around the old woman's plentiful figure and pat her lovingly on the back. "Hi, Bessie Mae. You know I can't miss work. Can't afford to. Besides, the doctor promised to call me soon as it's over."

That afternoon, encircled by noise, Glory thought longingly of the morning's walk down the silent path. The thin plank walls of the factory vibrated with the force of banging crates and cleaning tools. These sounds somehow complemented the song the workers were singing.

A rough male voice cut through the melody. "Make way; load's coming in." The clank of metal buckets and the thud of falling shrimp accompanied the burly voice. Glory watched the little gray creatures tumble onto the table. Here on land, their bulging black eyes and sharp whiskered beaks looked repulsive; yet underwater, they looked like fairies dancing through soft dreams.

"Glory Anne, phone."

Glory froze. Her face paled. The song receded, as though coming from a long distance. She clutched a shrimp in her left fist and stiffly turned to look for the voice that had spoken. She saw the hand that held the black receiver. Without conscious effort, her feet carried her slowly forward. Standing in front of the hand, she willed herself to take the instrument. She listened. One by one, the workers hushed their singing. Gently, she placed the receiver back into its cradle and turned with wide blank eyes to gaze at the workers. The warmth of her left hand made her look down, and she saw blood oozing between her fingers. The pretty little fairy's sharp beak had punctured her palm. She watched as the blood-covered shrimp fell to the floor, then walked across the room and out the doorway. The workers began to sing in low moaning tones.

Unconsciously, she walked toward the water. She sat on the empty dock looking out across the river while the waters gently licked and soothed her dangling feet. The sun was going down and the glistening surface reflected oranges and reds and purples. Marsh-covered riverbanks stood at the sun's base, and the reeds shot up like fingers reaching for the last bit of fire. The gulls, purple against the glowing orange ball, were going home. Shrouded in these strange colors, the familiar landscape before her had become unreal. And as she gazed out over this new world, she wondered at the difference twenty-four hours could make.

Behind her, she could hear the workers singing their sorrow, but this song could not lift her. Instead, it raged inside her head. The image of a shadowed face and luminous eyes reaching toward her joined the song. Maybe tomorrow it would lift her.



And as she sat all alone in the purple sunset, with only the lapping waters for comfort, the light in the house on the hilltop appeared to brighten the darkening sky.



## DUMPLING

Vicki Hill

Maggie drew a loving hand across the cellophane-wrapped surface of a beef roast, sighing plaintively. *Kroger's always has the best selection of meats*, she thought to herself as she noted with satisfaction the slightly marbled texture of the dark red beef. She permitted herself the luxury of examining first the roasts, then the steaks, and even the pork chops before moving on to the hamburger she had come for. She placed the firm, solid-feeling package in her cart with a mother's care.

Strolling blissfully along through the store, Maggie took a kind of shy delight in fingering all the packages. On the cookie aisle, she looked around nervously before leaning close to the ginger snaps and sniffing deeply. Even the smell of the cardboard didn't daunt her; she put a box in her cart and moved on.

She didn't linger when picking up the milk and cheese; the shining chrome surfaces of the refrigerated storage box reflected her short, lumpy form disturbingly. But she stood for a long while before the baked goods, entranced by the warm, cinnamon smells and the glistening, sugared surfaces.

The girl behind the counter watched the plumpish greying woman for some time before speaking. "Could I help you find something?" her voice, tinged with annoyance, finally asked.

Maggie was temporarily unbalanced. "Why, no, thank you. I was just looking."

It was time to go. Maggie looked at her shopping list to make sure she hadn't forgotten anything, and discovered that she had failed to buy anything at all for herself. She pushed wearily on to the produce section and stood for a long while dejectedly prodding the vegetables before deciding what to buy: apples and peaches and pears, lettuce and tomatoes and cucumbers. *I guess it'll be tossed salad again tonight*, she thought to herself.

As she was weighing her apples, she heard a familiar voice calling her name. She turned to see Barbara coming toward her, her cart empty except for a few containers of yogurt and some bananas.

"Maggie, darling, how are you? You look great!"

Maggie glanced down at a sneakered foot and muttered her thanks. "It's good to see you, Barbara."

"It's nice seeing you, too. It's been ages." She eyed Maggie's full shopping cart. "And how is Bob, anyway? I've been thinking for a while now about inviting the two of you over for dinner some night."

Maggie stiffened, instantly wary. "Well, I really don't know. Bob's

been working a lot of long hours lately, and I don't know if he'll feel up to going out. Why don't you let me call you?"

"OK, fine. I'll just wait till I hear from you, then." She smiled. "I'm so proud of you for sticking to your diet! How long's it been now, two weeks?"

"Three, come Saturday."

"Wonderful! And how much have you lost?"

Maggie looked away, suddenly consumed with interest in the broccoli spears. "I'm not sure -- I haven't weighed in a while. But I *feel* thinner."

"And you look thinner, too. I'm just so happy for you! Look, I've got to run; the kids'll be home from school in a few minutes, and if I'm not home to provide snacks there'll be trouble. See you soon!"

Maggie watched her friend trotting off to get in line at the express checkout, the skirt of her white tennis dress swirling about her taut thighs. Then she turned away, the effort of her smile still clinging to her face.

On her way to the checkout line, Maggie stopped off at the freezer compartment. *Just because I'm on a diet is no reason for Bob to suffer,* she thought. *I'll just pick up a carton of ice cream, for a special treat.*

She toyed with the hard, cold bricks of ice cream, trying to remember which kind Bob preferred. Then she saw a new flavor, "Heavenly Hash," and decided to try that one on him. Suddenly embarrassed, afraid she'd be seen, she stuffed the carton beneath a bag of pears and hurried on to the checkout.

Standing in line was the hardest part. The candy display beckoned to her with the maddening, slightly waxy smell of chocolate. In an attempt to divert her attention, Maggie studied the covers of the pulp magazines that stared her down from their metal racks. Linda Evans' cold blue stare assured her that eating only grapefruit and celery would guarantee a svelte figure in two weeks; the *Enquirer* promised miracles with peanut butter. Maggie's fingers itched to pick up one of the magazines and read about these amazing diets, discover their secrets, but her pride wouldn't let her be seen actually reading one. Still, she wondered.

Just as the candy was beginning to tug at the edges of her mind again, Maggie's thoughts were intruded upon. "Excuse me." An obscenely fat woman wearing polyester shorts shoved her way through, reaching down and grabbing a Snickers bar with one hand, a *Ladies Home Journal* with the other. "They have the greatest recipes in this magazine. Have you ever read it?" she asked.

Maggie looked about, flustered. "Why, no, I never have," she replied, painfully conscious of the bulges of flab on the woman's ghostly white legs.

The woman returned to her place at the back of the line, absently turning the pages of the magazine as she began to munch her candy bar. Maggie sighed with relief as the checkout girl started pulling her groceries from the cart.



Bob was late, as usual. Maggie peeked anxiously at the lasagna in the oven for the hundredth time, terrified that it might be drying out. *There's nothing Bob hates worse than dried-out lasagna*, she thought. This time the situation was particularly delicate; she'd never tried to cut her mother's lasagna recipe into fourths before. She hoped she'd gotten all the calculations right.

She heard the front door as it opened. "Bob?" she called, drying her hands on her apron as she rushed into the living room.

He stood in the hallway, his sample case at his feet, sorting through the mail on the table as he loosened his tie. "Hiya, dumpling, what's up?" he sang out cheerfully, dropping the mail and holding out his beefy arms for an embrace.

"Oh, nothing much. How was your day?"

She listened patiently as he recounted the day's triumphs and petty defeats entertainingly for her. As he talked, she backed into the kitchen to get his dinner out of the oven and set the table. When he had finished his story, she said, "I thought we'd eat in the dining room tonight, Bob. I made something kind of special."

"It smells great," he said, dipping a quick finger into the tomato sauce at the edge of the pan.

"Careful! You'll burn yourself, silly. I just took that out of the oven. Now go and wash up, and I'll have it ready when you get back."

Bob obeyed, whistling softly as he went into the back of the house.

By the time he returned to the dining room, she had already heaped his plate with steaming lasagna. At her place, however, there was only a small bowl of tossed salad.

"Aren't you going to eat with me?" he asked, an edge coming into his voice.

"Oh, Bob, you know I can't eat food like that."

"Well, what fun is it for me to eat by myself?"

"You're not by yourself. I'm right here."

"Yeah, but you're not eating. That rabbit-food doesn't count, and you know it. I don't know why you bothered setting up in here; there's no point to it, just for me."

Maggie looked down into her salad bowl, stricken. "Bob, I only wanted to please you. I thought you'd enjoy eating in here for a change. Since I've been on this diet, you're always complaining that we never have a real meal together." She stirred at her lettuce leaves despondently, as if searching for something more interesting beneath them.

He didn't say anything, just tucked his napkin into his open collar and began to eat. "Um," he taunted, a little cruelly. "This is really great. You've out-done yourself, dumpling." He looked up at her slyly. "Don't you want to try just a little taste?"

For a moment, Maggie brightened. Then she shook her head sadly.



"No. I can't have any. But thanks, anyway."

"Too bad. It's really delicious." He continued to eat with obvious relish, occasionally emitting little groans of satisfaction.

Maggie watched him closely for a while. A tiny spot of tomato sauce clung to the left side of his chin; she stared at it in fascination until finally he rubbed it away with the corner of his napkin. Catching her eye, he reproached her. "If you're going to sit there and stare at me like that, I'm going to lose my appetite."

She looked quickly away, and began to eat her salad. *Ugh, she thought. If I never see another piece of lettuce in my life, it'll be too soon.*

\* \* \* \* \*

Some time later, after Bob had retired into the bedroom to watch television while he ate his dessert, Maggie stood before the sink, absent-mindedly washing up the dishes. She stared at her reflection in the dark windowpane over the sink, thinking about what she'd fix Bob for breakfast in the morning. For the six years they'd been married, she had made it a point to prepare a special breakfast on Saturday mornings. Sometimes it was standard fare: bacon, eggs, hash browns, toast; sometimes she made french toast with sausage. She thought she'd try something a little more ambitious this time, put the waffle-iron her mother-in-law had given her to use. *What goes well with waffles*, she asked herself. *Maybe sausage, like with the french toast?*

She had finished the dishes, and could linger in the kitchen no longer. She realized that she was still hungry, as always. Grabbing a pear from the refrigerator, she went into the bedroom to watch television with Bob.

He was absorbed in a football game, eating a bowl full of "Heavenly Hash." She crouched on the edge of the bed and, curling her small, round body in upon itself and holding the pear in her tiny paws, she began to take small, furtive bites, looking around after each one as if in fear that someone would try to take it away from her. Bob glared at her, annoyed.

"Do you have to make so much noise with that thing? Why is it that everything you eat lately crunches?"

"Sorry," she retorted with an attempt at sarcasm. "I'm surprised you can hear anything over the roar of that stupid game."

"What's that?" he asked, cocking his head almost belligerently.

"Nothing." She threw the pear in the wastebasket; she didn't really want it, anyway.

During the next commercial, Maggie decided to try and make peace. Searching her mind for a neutral topic of conversation, she hit upon Barbara. "I saw Barbara Graham in the grocery store today. She said something about inviting us over for dinner some time soon."

"Great," Bob said, his lip curling with scorn. "That's just what I need, to go and eat dinner with that crazy bitch. I suppose she's behind this

latest diet thing, huh?" He looked at his wife coldly. "Well, if you want to look like her, all scrawny and malnourished, it's your business. But I think you're nuts."

Maggie said nothing, turning her attention instead to the Pizza Hut commercial on television. But when the game continued, she found her mind wandering again.

Bob's spoon was scraping at the bottom of his bowl now. The sound tugged at Maggie, and she soon became fascinated with the sight of the laden spoon travelling again and again to her mouth as he stared at the television set. She licked her lips, painfully aware of the scent of chocolate drifting over the expanse of bed toward her. Her eyes narrowed, and her back became abruptly stiff as she noted the way he paused between bites to chew the tiny bits of chocolate and nuts between his front teeth. She was so absorbed in watching him that she failed to notice when he stopped eating and started staring back at her.

"What the hell is it this time?" he cried, exasperated.

Maggie ignored the question, posing one of her own instead. "What's in it?"

"What's in what?" Bob was really shouting now.

"The ice cream. What's in it?"

"Oh, for Chrissake!" Bob rolled his eyes with exaggerated annoyance.

"No, really. I'm only curious. What's in it, exactly? Please tell me."

He began to laugh, a cruel, humourless laugh. "You really want to know? Well, it's in the freezer. Why'n't you see for yourself?"

\* \* \* \* \*

Much later, Maggie lay sleepless at the very edge of the bed, trying not to disturb her snoring husband. Hunger was by now a sharp pain in her mind as well as her stomach, and she feared she'd never sleep. Finally, she decided that the only thing that could satisfy her was an answer to her earlier, only half-joking question. She crept from the bed and down the hall into the kitchen.

She didn't turn on any lights, but made her way directly to the freezer. When she opened the door, the kitchen was bathed in an eerie, bluish light, by which it was just possible for her to read the list of ingredients on the side of the ice cream carton. Milk, cocoa, sugar, chocolate chips, nuts, marshmallow nougat. Just as she'd thought: those *were* nut he'd been crunching.

But her satisfaction was short-lived. She thought with disgust of the meagre dinner she'd had, and the equally meagre results. Bob was furious with her, and she hadn't lost an ounce in over a week. Discouraged, she came to an uncomfortable decision. She would have a bite, just one bite, of ice cream. Just to make her feel better, so she could sleep. She reached for a

spoon in the dish drainer and began to eat.

A few moments of happiness passed, and a guilty smile crawled over Maggie's face as she continued to eat. But just as she was about to quit and go back to bed, she was found out.

Bob entered the kitchen and flipped on the light with a delighted "Ah-ha!" Maggie froze, unsure whether she should drop the evidence and run or simply make up some ridiculous excuse for her bad behavior. But to her surprise, he didn't give her a hard time. He just took the carton from her hands and replaced it in the freezer, a tender smile on his face.

Maggie began to cry. "It's OK, honey," Bob commiserated, taking her in his arms and stroking her back. He pried the spoon from her fist and laid it on the counter, then held her for a long moment, rocking her gently back and forth and murmuring soothingly.

Gradually, Maggie's sobs trailed away to be replaced by an endless succession of mumbled apologies, to him, to Barbara, to herself.

"Come on, dumpling," Bob whispered. "Let's go to bed."



## THE PELICANS

So gracefully they wave their wings  
Beyond the surf, the pelicans  
Their wingtips  
Graze  
The tips of waves  
Or so it seems as they glide by

Unhurriedly they move as one  
Two lines converge  
And point the way  
Intent upon their hunting run  
Unknowingly a grey parade

They rise and fall with sociable ease  
Abruptly up -  
Then down again  
As though they swam on waves of air  
Through wind-cupped wings revealed

How parallel their perfect paths  
They cannot seem to be  
Knocked down  
By jealous waves who envy flight  
So simple and serene

A gentle jesting irony it is  
That clumsy  
Feathered clowns afoot  
Should be so wonderous fleet  
Above the waves, the pelicans

*David Kelley*



## RELIGIOUS SYMBOLISM IN FLANNERY O'CONNOR'S "GREENLEAF"

*Maria B. Dunn*

In Flannery O'Connor's "Greenleaf," the protagonist, Mrs. May, experiences self-realization during her last moments of life. The method by which O'Connor turns an account of a bestial attack into a spiritual awakening is through the use of overt religious symbolism. This symbolism manifests itself in the function of some of the story's characters: Mrs. May, the Greenleafs, their twin sons, the May sons, and the bull. The story's climax is reached at its violent conclusion, and although one is not sure of the magnitude of her self-realization, Mrs. May experiences her moment of grace at that particular time. O'Connor expressed her uncertainty regarding the achievement of this theme of redemption in a letter to a friend: "I am very happy right now writing a story ['Greenleaf'] in which I plan for the heroine, aged 63, to be gored by a bull. I am not convinced yet that this is purgation or whether I identify myself with her or the bull. In any case, it is going to take some doing to do it and it may be the risk that is making me happy."<sup>1</sup>

Purgation, or rather one's experience of redemption, was a theme very much addressed by Flannery O'Connor. This theme runs through some of her better known works such as "Revelation," *The Violent Bear It Away*, and *Wise Blood*. In "Greenleaf," the theme of redemption is brought to the foreground by the character of Mrs. May. One must see some irony in the name designated to the protagonist of this story, yet one cannot be altogether sure that this was the intention of the author. Flannery O'Connor's disdain of the dissection of her work was renowned. In a letter to an English professor dated June 6, 1964, Miss O'Connor states that she had no real motive behind naming Mrs. May what she did except that, perhaps, "some English teacher would write and ask me why...."<sup>2</sup> It is O'Connor's same evasiveness, however, that prompts some readers to analyze the character and her name. In Mrs. May's vain attempts to confine the natural and spiritual sources of life, she seems mocked by the dual suggestions of her name. To be thought of as a participant in the springtime fertility rites of May surely contradicts her character, and, as "May" is a shortened form of "Mary," she is also compared with the Mother of divine life.<sup>3</sup>

These ironic suggestions of her name better illustrate the flatness of Mrs. May's character. She is a stubborn and, at the same time, well-meaning

person who only wants for herself what she has rightfully worked to obtain. But that she can envision herself in front of some "judgement seat" declaring that in her life she has worked and not wallowed is also indicative of her overweening pride.<sup>4</sup> Not surprisingly, then, one can interpret the story's violent conclusion in light of Mrs. May's hubris, and it is the conformity of her development throughout the story which enables the reader to deem Mrs. May a flat character.

Frederick Asals, author of a most insightful article on "Greenleaf," further explains Mrs. May's symbolic function in the story: "Mrs. May is an ironic garden doubly enclosed, sealed up sterilely behind the protecting fences of the hedge and the 'black wall of trees' bounding her property, locked in the denials of her ego."<sup>5</sup> Mrs. May's repressed emotions are vented by the routine of her work and, through this method, her character exposes the bitter and frequently superior attitudes it possesses. Asals further writes on the willfulness of Mrs. May's soul: "Nature holds no revelations for Mrs. May. A country woman only 'by persuasion,' she meets the natural world - and indeed existence itself -- as negative pressures to be resisted, hostile forces to be bent to her will."<sup>6</sup>

This obstinate overcoming of the world is made evident by Mrs. May's readiness to change her will in such a way that the inevitably foolish marriages of her sons, Wesley and Scofield, will not destroy all that she has worked to acquire.<sup>7</sup> We shall learn more of Mrs. May's sons later, but one should note that although she is a stubborn and generally overbearing woman, Mrs. May has virtually no control over her mocking sons. She also exerts little influence over her hired hand, Greenleaf.

The Greenleafs are a shiftlessly large and uneducated family. With the exception of the twins, E.T. and O.T., the family has lived on Mrs. May's farm for fifteen years. Mrs. Greenleaf, an unkempt prayer healer, repulses Mrs. May, and Mrs. May also believes that Mr. Greenleaf is a cunning farm hand. The Greenleaf family is clearly the antagonist in the story. Furthermore, the family name is filled with religious symbolism. Asal comments:

On the one hand, their very primitiveness associates them with the springs of natural life, as their burgeoning family testifies; yet their unbuttoned fertility also metaphorically receives divine sanction in Jeremiah 17: 7-8: "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when the heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green . . . ." The Greenleafs' primitive reverence for all earthly life, which reveals itself in the excesses of Mrs. Greenleaf's prayer healing and the surly absurdity of her husband's reluctance to destroy the bull, merges indistinguishably into their crude Christianity . . . .<sup>8</sup>

Mrs. Greenleaf, who is encountered only once in the story, is mystically linked to the realm of the Eternal. She is a fanatically religious woman who sometimes shows her devotion by sprawling herself on the ground and by making loud pleas to Jesus. This demonstrates an all-embracing love for Christ. Perhaps these actions seem primitive and grotesque, yet they are quite natural. In comparison, Mrs. May's "cold-cream-laden" face and "green rubber curlers" symbolize her artificiality.<sup>9</sup>

By contrast, Mr. Greenleaf is a complacent and unhurried person. Yet, like his wife, Mr. Greenleaf seems to be closely linked to the natural world, as his walk -- one that seems to be "on the perimeter of some invisible circle" -- suggests. To Mrs. May, this peculiarity symbolizes Mr. Greenleaf's uselessness as a worker, but it can also be interpreted as his closeness to the cyclic rhythms of nature.<sup>10</sup>

O'Connor's theme of redemption is further unraveled by the attitudes of Mrs. May and the Greenleafs toward religion. The author does this by her use of suggestive compression and by paralleling Mrs. May's attitudes toward the bull and religion. Through the use of suggestive compression, O'Connor turns the encounter in the woods between Mrs. May and Mrs. Greenleaf into a foreshadowing device. This scene also functions as a descriptive observance to a reaction.<sup>11</sup> When O'Connor writes that Mrs. May "felt as if some violent unleashed force had broken out of the ground and was charging toward her," we receive a vivid portrayal of Mrs. May's disgust upon hearing Mrs. Greenleaf's pleas to Jesus and of the violent finale as well.<sup>12</sup> Stuart L. Burns, author of an article on O'Connor's use of sun imagery, further writes on Mrs. May's repressed attitude toward religion: "Her attitude toward the bull closely parallels her religious philosophy. She believes that both Christ and the bull should be confined, the former to the church, the latter to a pen -- her reasoning in both cases being that, let loose, each represents a threat to good breeding."<sup>13</sup> It is her repression of natural emotions that helps the reader accept Mrs. May's death in spite of its seemingly unjust violence.

There is clearly a difference, then, between the symbolic function of Mrs. May and that of the Greenleafs in their expressions and acceptance of religious belief. It is this difference that also allows for the mythic and religious implications of the bull. Frederick Asals best summarizes the difference between protagonist and antagonist: "Mrs. May is a decent, orderly, well-meaning woman, but her embattled existence is clearly fruitless in every sense, the sterile assertion of ego and empty social values. The Greenleafs, on the other hand, are clearly at one with the divine powers, yet they are so primitively responsive to animal and mystical life that they emerge as a radically anti-social force . . ."<sup>14</sup>

To further analyze O'Connor's use of religious symbolism throughout "Greenleaf," one must also examine the "double thematic movement" that the May boys and the Greenleaf twins project within the story.<sup>15</sup> The May boys, who were as different as "night and day," and the Greenleaf twins, who, according to their tenant farmer, were "like one man in two skins,"









underscore this movement and give the story its symbolically mythic aspects.<sup>16</sup> These aspects do not vary greatly from nor adhere to any particular set of myths. Instead, O'Connor draws from a combination of primitive mythologies. We will see this quality more manifestly in the last "character" discussed: the bull.

The May boys (Wesley, a professor, Scofield, an insurance salesman, both unmarried) are interestingly created to function as a mirror for their mother's spiritual shortcomings. Frederick Asals states: "Like distorting mirrors, her sons send back at her grotesque reflections of her own values. Wesley's snarling self-pity is an uglier version of her own . . . , and Scofield's grubbing pursuit of money is only a debased form of [Mrs. May's] 'practicality' . . . ." <sup>17</sup> That the boys' taunting of their mother is a vessel for the transport of their resentment is obvious. Yet this is solely the fault of Mrs. May, who, through her pride and close-mindedness, instilled these horrible traits into her otherwise uninspired children. Indeed, Wesley's vicious remark to Mrs. May at the breakfast table that he "wouldn't milk a cow to save [her] soul from hell," illustrates the masculine hostility with which Mrs. May is surrounded. For it is not only her sons, but also the twins and Mr. Greenleaf who give abuse in return for her lodgings and wages.<sup>18</sup>

Mrs. May's spiritual and physical sterility is further mirrored by her sons when they are compared to the Greenleaf twins, E.T. and O.T. The Greenleaf twins carry out their roles as fathers, husbands, and sons with ease. The May boys are ill-tempered and unproductive.<sup>19</sup> On a comical note, O'Connor has Mrs. May sarcastically comment on the Greenleafs' pride in just having had twins "as if this were something smart they had thought of themselves." <sup>20</sup>

Ironically, the greatest difference between the two sets of sons is the fact that the Greenleafs are twins. The connotation of twin offspring has always been favorable throughout time, as Frederick Asals explains. "In ancient tradition, twins could be maleficent or beneficent, accursed or sacred, yet almost universally they were believed closely related to the supernatural and thought to possess extraordinary powers, chiefly connected with fertility." <sup>21</sup> The supernaturalness behind the financially successful twins is also enhanced by the fact that they never appear onstage. Their mysterious presences hide laughingly behind the extension of both their souls, the bull.<sup>22</sup> Accordingly, when the tenant farmer declares that his bosses are "'like one man in two skins,'" his remark further supports the supernatural force "with which primitive peoples invested the appearance of the 'double soul.'"<sup>23</sup>

Therefore, to examine the characters of the May boys and that of the Greenleaf twins is really to compare fertility with infertility, bliss with misery, and reverence with irreverence. Mrs. May's justification for the success of the "scrub-human" Greenleaf twins is, of course, World War Two.

The last character one must study in O'Connor's use of religious



symbolism throughout "Greenleaf" is the bull. The animal immediately takes on the dual representations of Christ or any of the mythical gods of fertility before the first paragraph of the story ends. In Frederick Asals' article, "The Mythic Dimensions of Flannery O'Connor's 'Greenleaf,'" he also points out that the bull's horns (the focus on which the story opens and concludes) can represent the two characters of Christ as "fierce judge" and "gentle Saviour."<sup>24</sup> Moreover, this interpretation would better illustrate O'Connor's idea of the "unbreakable grip" with which the bull's horns finally espouse Mrs. May's empty soul. This grisly portrayal suggests an association with the coming of Christ into the life of Mrs. May. In this sense, one can view the coming of Christ as an agony and, at the same time, a lover's embrace.<sup>25</sup> However, Josephine Hendin points out: "The scrub bull whose sperm will harm Mrs. May's cows . . . is one of O'Connor's ambiguous symbols. He may be Christ, a god wearing a prickly crown, as he gnaws at Mrs. May's shrubs, yet his crucifixion of the lady on his horns results in a perception of nothingness."<sup>26</sup> Even if the reader chooses to dismiss the religious symbolism behind the bull, its role should at least intimate Mrs. May's view of virility and her experiences with the hostility of men toward her.

The reader should, of course, combine the dual suggestions of the bull's overwhelming presence with O'Connor's use of two other frequently mentioned images in the story. Stuart L. Burns explains:

The sun, a scrub bull and a silver bullet combine to dramatize the divine agency of Christ in this story. The Greenleaf's bull (Christ's earthly nature) is first seen "silvered in the moonlight . . . like some patient god come down to woo" Mrs. May. . . . "Silvered" suggests a link between bull and bullet, while later bull and sun are metaphorically associated: "Looking down, she saw a darker shape that might have been its [the sun's] shadow . . . moving among them." The symbolic configuration is completed when Mrs. May pictures the sun as being "like a silver bullet ready to drop into her brain." This last passage vividly stresses her alienation from Christ and the promise of redemption in terms of her hostility to the sun.<sup>27</sup>

As previously noted, the use of suggestive compression is masterfully woven throughout "Greenleaf." The images of the bull, the sun, and the bullet all indirectly explain Mrs. May's imminent redemption to the reader. It is the subtleness of the use of suggestive compression that allows the story to be so intricately constructed and yet so easily understood. There are, however, other literary devices that help the reader successfully grasp the meaning of the story's climax. We have examined O'Connor's use of suggestive compression, but there are also figures of speech that abound

throughout "Greenleaf" and are laden with religious symbolism. These figures of speech (i.e., "like a rough chalice," "like a silver bullet," "like a menacing prickly crown") juxtapose religion and nature in such a manner that these forces jointly emphasize O'Connor's theme of redemption.<sup>28</sup> It may be the very juxtaposition of such elements that allows for the comical yet distressing sensations the conclusion of the story produces. Moreover, it should be noted that it is O'Connor's tone that produces such an effect. Miles Orvell, author of *Invisible Parade: The Fiction of Flannery O'Connor*, explains this literary device: "The tone of the story, meanwhile, is governed by a carefully modulated comic control, whereby seemingly gratuitous violence is subsumed under a vision of order."<sup>29</sup>

The violence within the conclusion is itself full of religious symbolism. It is the effectiveness of this violence which distinguishes writers like Flannery O'Connor, William Faulkner, and others who employ images of the grotesque in their work. Orvell states: "In the process by which the bull comes to symbolize something more mysterious than a dumb beast, one can see an accession to mystery through the painful annihilation of the flesh."<sup>30</sup> It is the violence which, finally, raises the question of redemption in the reader's mind. When the bull gores Mrs. May, does her soul undergo a spiritual awakening? One does not know, as the story ends with her death, but one might gather that the final discovery which Mrs. May whispers into the bull's ear is probably void of any self-interest or indifference. Indeed, when we are told that "she had the look of a person whose sight has suddenly been restored but who finds the light unbearable," one can imagine that, like St. Paul, Mrs. May was blinded by the brilliance of her spiritual realization.<sup>31</sup>

The theme of redemption in "Greenleaf" can only be understood when the reader examines the nature of its characters and the violence of its conclusion. It is primarily through the use of religious symbolism in her characters and the exercise of various literary devices throughout the story that O'Connor underscores one of her favorite literary themes. Frederick Asals comparatively summarizes O'Connor's work. "What Miss O'Connor presents in 'Greenleaf' is a kind of smaller modern version of Euripides' *Bacchae* with Mrs. May as the Pentheus figure whose refusal to acknowledge the essential physical and spiritual terms of life calls down upon her the fittingly ironic punishment of the gods."<sup>32</sup>



## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Flannery O'Connor, ed., Sally Fitzgerald, *The Habit of Being* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1979), p. 129.
- <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 582.
- <sup>3</sup> Frederick Asals, "The Mythic Dimensions of Flannery O'Connor's 'Greenleaf,'" *Studies in Short Fiction*, 5 (1968), 321-322.
- <sup>4</sup> Flannery O'Connor, ed., Sally Fitzgerald, *Three by Flannery O'Connor* (New York: Signet Classic, 1983), p. 305.
- <sup>5</sup> Frederick Asals, "The Mythic Dimensions of Flannery O'Connor's 'Greenleaf,'" *Studies in Short Fiction*, 5 (1968), 322.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 320.
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 321.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 322.
- <sup>9</sup> Stuart L. Burns, "'Torn by the Lord's Eye': Flannery O'Connor's Use of Sun Imagery," *Twentieth Century Literature*, 13 (1967), 162.
- <sup>10</sup> Frederick Asals, "The Mythic Dimensions of Flannery O'Connor's 'Greenleaf,'" *Studies in Short Fiction*, 5 (1968), 323.
- <sup>11</sup> Stuart L. Burns, "'Torn by the Lord's Eye': Flannery O'Connor's Use of Sun Imagery," *Twentieth Century Literature*, 13 (1967), 162.
- <sup>12</sup> Flannery O'Connor, ed., Sally Fitzgerald, *Three By Flannery O'Connor* (New York: Signet Classic, 1983), p. 290.
- <sup>13</sup> Stuart L. Burns, "'Torn by the Lord's Eye': Flannery O'Connor's Use of Sun Imagery," *Twentieth Century Literature*, 13 (1967), 161.
- <sup>14</sup> Frederick Asals, "The Mythic Dimensions of Flannery O'Connor's 'Greenleaf,'" *Studies in Short Fiction*, 5 (1968), 329.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 325.
- <sup>16</sup> Flannery O'Connor, ed., Sally Fitzgerald, *Three By Flannery O'Connor* (New York: Signet Classic, 1983), p. 289, 299.
- <sup>17</sup> Frederick Asals, "The Mythic Dimensions of Flannery O'Connor's 'Greenleaf,'" *Studies in Short Fiction*, 5 (1968), 321.
- <sup>18</sup> Josephine Hendin, *The World of Flannery O'Connor* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1970), p. 113.
- <sup>19</sup> Stuart L. Burns, "'Torn by the Lord's Eye': Flannery O'Connor's Use of Sun Imagery," *Twentieth Century Literature*, 13 (1967), 162.
- <sup>20</sup> Flannery O'Connor, ed., Sally Fitzgerald, *Three By Flannery O'Connor* (New York: Signet Classic, 1983), p. 292.
- <sup>21</sup> Frederick Asals, "The Mythic Dimensions of Flannery O'Connor's 'Greenleaf,'" *Studies in Short Fiction*, 5 (1968), 324.

22 Ibid., p. 324.

23 Ibid., p. 324.

24 Ibid., p. 326.

25 Miles Orvell, *Invisible Parade: The Fiction of Flannery O'Connor* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1972), p. 27.

26 Josephine Hendin, *The World of Flannery O'Connor* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1970), p. 114-115.

27 Stuart L. Burns, "'Torn by the Lord's Eye': Flannery O'Connor's Use of Sun Imagery," *Twentieth Century Literature*, 13 (1967), 161.

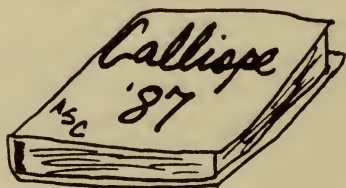
28 James A. Grimshaw, Jr., *The Flannery O'Connor Companion* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1981), p. 53.

29 Miles Orvell, *Invisible Parade: The Fiction of Flannery O'Connor* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1972), p. 23.

30 Ibid., p. 23.

31 Flannery O'Connor, ed., Sally Fitzgerald, *Three By Flannery O'Connor* (New York: Signet Classic, 1983), p. 306.

32 Frederick Asals, "The Mythic Dimensions of Flannery O'Connor's 'Greenleaf,'" *Studies in Short Fiction*, 5 (1968), 329.



## SNAP SHOTS

*John Welsh*

*Snapshot: Bob Strozier, mid-winter, 1983*

He holds the stetson over his heart  
And smiles at the camera.  
As it shoots the picture,  
His hat crown becomes its bulls-eye.

*Snapshot: Day Student*

Rising listlessly --  
The lecture over --  
He saunters past me  
Proudly wearing last night's hickey.

*Snapshot: Pedalling in the Red Light District*

The press of early morning traffic:  
Stopped, I am restless to move;  
I play with the gas, race with the pedal,  
And turn my mind to the corner just ahead.  
Then my absent eye catches the double reflection;  
A car ahead winks at mine.

# LOVE OF MY LIFE

*Andy Pena*

I don't know why I fall in love so damn easily. I guess it's part of being an incurable romantic. Or it could be that I watch too many "Love, American Style" reruns. My analyst has an interesting theory about it all - he says that I'm certifiably wacko. I guess the most unnerving feature of my affliction is that I am able to fall in love virtually anywhere at any given time; I have become eternally enamoured in grocery lines, at the library, in my political science class (can one really fall in love in a political science class?), and who knows where else?

It can even happen while I'm driving to work, which is precisely what occurred on one fateful afternoon. I was driving down the expressway in my usual state of semi-consciousness, when my eyes were suddenly assaulted by the most beautiful sight I ever beheld. There she was, radiating down upon me from the billboard above the ServeYourOwnDamnSelf gas station. I must confess that this time it wasn't my typical five-minute love affair because the object of my yearning had not two eyes but two headlights; instead of two legs she had four wheels; and rather than skin of porcelain, my darling had skin of the finest sheet metal money could buy, vivaciously highlighted by a rouge of racy red paint. Yes, the inevitable had happened: I had fallen in love with an inanimate object, namely, a car.

It was a summer ad, complete with the appropriate number of tanned, bikinied Annette Funicello types in appropriately perky positions around the too-hip machine. They all had their adoring eyes fixed upon the blow-dried young jock, resplendent as he reclined behind the wheel with a look on his face like he knew something about your mother that your dad would divorce her for if he ever found it out. All of that, however, was irrelevant once I saw the car. The car! This asphalt angel was coolness incarnate, and I had to have her.

The next day was my day off, and I couldn't get to the dealership fast enough. I left most of my tires permanently embedded in the parking lot as I screeched to a halt in front of the sales office, narrowly missing a large off-road jeep display, a small Japanese economy sedan, and a medium-sized family station wagon -- complete with a medium-sized family, which rapidly evacuated same upon witnessing my frenetic arrival. I never knew a three-year-old was capable of jumping quite that high.

I shot out of my car and into the office with a sprint that would have done Bruce Jenner proud. My entrance caused more than a little consternation amongst the salespeople; it seems that, in my haste, I had



neglected to open the office doors before entering them. Score one point for machismo.

I stood there, wild-eyed and brushing glass off my shirt (I still can't get it all out of my hair), when one of the more intrepid sales guys comes over and asks, "Sir, are you all right?" The way his voice tripped over the words "all right" suggested to me that it wasn't just my physical health that he was inquiring about. Nevertheless, I swiftly took control of the situation. "Never mind about that," I rasped through clenched teeth -- by this time I really had become a madman. "Do you have the new Bogus X1000 sports coupe by Erroneous Motors?"

"Why, er . . . yessir," he said. His voice trembled like a plate of Jello in an earthquake. "We have one left. A red one."

"Fine. Show it to me. Now."

He led me through the new exit I had made and out onto the lot. "It really is a fine automobile," he said, trying to regain his salesman's airs as best as the situation would allow.

"Yeah, right," I mumbled, resisting his attempt at patron-patronizing. I really hate how salesmen always have to butter you up for the big kill. They do it all the time with sugary phrases like "excellent choice" and "fine automobile." Call it a CAR, for Chrissake, and let's get on with it!

When we reached the car he made a graceful arc with his arm just like the girls do on "The Price is Right." The snare drum in my chest turned into a tympani as I caressed the car with my eyes and hands. The streamlined body, radiating its redness, burned itself into my retinas. The dashboard, with its impressive array of screens, gauges, lights, and buttons, looked as if it was designed more for lunar landings than negotiating parking lots. The red quilted leather seats had to have been designed by the same guy that decorates the interiors of cheap bowling alley lounges. She was just like the one on the billboard, only better, because the jock was nowhere to be seen. The feeling that coursed through me was not unlike the feeling you get when you learn that the homecoming queen just broke up with her boyfriend, needs a date for the prom, and whaddaya know, YOU'RE AVAILABLE! It was obvious that I was born to drive this car.

"The Bogus X1000 is the epitome of automotive excellence," the guy cooed. Sugary phrase number two. Do I hear three? "This is surely a car for the discriminating motorist." This guy was a real pro.

"Here are the keys to my car," I said. "Just look it over, tell me how much you'll give me for it, and LET'S MAKE A DAMN DEAL!" I sounded like Monty Hall on a bad angel dust trip.

He saw my car, offered me a deal, and I greedily signed the contract. He could have asked for my mother and my first born and I wouldn't have balked. Well, maybe I'm overdramatizing. For my mother and my first born, I would have to insist that he throw in some floor mats.

I thanked him for his help, he thanked me for not shattering any more glass, and I drove my dream off the lot a contented soul. I was in paradise.

The car made me the object of universal envy wherever I went, changed forever my outlook on commuting, and improved astronomically my chances of getting a date for the weekend. It wasn't very long, however, before there was trouble in paradise.

Driving to the convenience store to get some toothpicks (anything for an excuse to drive), I had to swerve to avoid a head-on collision with a motorcyclist whose goggles had collected so much mud that he was reduced to assuming where the road was. As my beautiful car and I left the blacktop, I pondered such wide-ranging topics as the question of why scientists had not yet developed the goggle-sized windshield wiper, why these things always happen to me, and approximately how many more milliseconds my mortal soul had upon this earth. These questions were answered almost immediately as my car came to rest in a Korean health food store. I sat there in a dazed stupor with my lap full of bean sprouts, muttering "...insurance...insurance..." My meditation was broken by a short Oriental man in an apron, who was so traumatized by this totally uncalled-for invasion of his shop that he was incapable of forming any words other than, "What in the hell!" "What in the hell!" There was really only one reply I could muster.

"Do you have any toothpicks?"

I count the oil spots on the greasy overalls of the mechanic as he paces around what was left of my car. There is no expression on his face as he makes mental notes of the various injuries. After a few minutes he straightens his back, takes off his Napa Parts baseball cap, scratches his bald spot, and asks the begging question.

"What happened, son?"

"I went to buy some toothpicks and I made a wrong turn," I said, really not wanting to recount the sordid details. I felt so ashamed standing there that I couldn't even look the guy in the face; instead, I focused my stare on his name stitched on the front pocket: Harvey.

"I see," Harvey said, in the condescending tone of voice that only an expensive mechanic can have. He knew a sucker when he saw one.

"So how much do you think it'll come to?" The words felt like cotton inside my mouth. Nobody likes to ask a question with so painful an answer.

"Well, she's pretty banged up. But then, you already know that because here you are."

"Sir, my admiration for your perceptive powers knows no bounds. How much?"

"Five thousand dollars," he said, as casually as if he were giving me the time of day.

"Five thousand dollars?!!!" How in the world can they quote such gargantuan figures and not even blink? I'm convinced that these guys have to go to school to learn this art, because it's definitely not a skill that the layman possesses. Certainly not this layman.

"Well, you got a right front fender that's a goner. And your front bumper looks like a cheap accordion. And it's gonna take a heap of work to get your engine out of the back seat. You know how these new cars are. So damn hard to work on and all."

"Oh, please," I cried in mock pity, "you're breaking my heart!"

His voice took on an indignant tone. "Look, that's my price, son. Take it or leave it."

Since it was the cheapest place I had found, and since I already owed him for the towing service, I took it, and seriously considered mass murder as a viable means of relieving tension. He told me to come back in two weeks, and was even gracious enough to give me a lift to the nearest car rental agency. I made sure to tell him that it was the very least he could do for me, seeing as how I was about to put his kids through college.

Even though my insurance would pay for most of the damages (yes, my policy does have a stupidity clause), I couldn't help the feeling of depression that swept over me as I entered the rental agency. All of a sudden this goddess behind the desk asked in a honey voice, "Sir, can I help you?"

It was her! THE woman of my dreams! It could have been my imagination, but she looked kind of like one of the beach bunnies on the very billboard that had gotten me into this mess in the first place. It was a transgression I felt I could easily forgive.

"Um...uh..." What does one say to a goddess?

"Can I help you, sir?" she repeated, blinking her mesmerizing brown eyes.

"Ah...yes, as a matter of fact, you can. I smoothed down my hair and discreetly made sure my fly wasn't open. "I need to rent a car while my car is in the shop being fi- uh, customized. What's the finest automobile that you have available? Something a discriminating motorist would appreciate?"

"Well, sir --"

"Please -- call me Maximillian," I said, in my best James Bond voice. Smooth is my middle name.

"Well, Maximillian, I have a Bogus X1000 that's not being used at the moment. Is that all right?"

"Quite." She couldn't have been more impressed. It was evident from the sly grin that she flashed at her co-worker next to her. In a few minutes I was in the driver's seat of the Bogus X1000, on my way home and thinking about the encounter I had just had. Was she really impressed? Or was I just the victim of another attack of wishful thinking? I really thought I saw something in her expression. But then again, I've seen that same expression when I take my dates out to eat Mexican food. Oh, well. I'll find out for sure when I go to return the car next week, because I'm gonna ask her out for the rest of her life. Maybe I do fall in love a little too easily.



### Connie's Place (BD, K thru 3)

Bigger bodies and more control  
are what I am accustomed to --  
They have learned the rules enough  
To follow, if not believe.  
Caution, calculation, sense of direction  
for most,  
But some fade into the rear wall, soundless,  
To sleep through their academic dream.  
To awaken, focus, and con them into  
thinking are the tasks I face:

Strategy (Mapping my verbal moves) mixed  
With basic choreography at the blackboard,  
Chalk dust replacing greasepaint, and  
hopes for a long run  
(Long enough at least for Tenure).

From nine until noon I am a clown,  
Prancing and dancing and howling --  
Seeking a crowd that will pause and listen.

In your room I am me  
There is no need for mystery  
But only for one grown up man  
who listens and talks and  
shares what young eyes see --  
In your room, I am free.

*Steve Ealy*



The following short story was written as an assignment in Mr. Clancy's English 201. The object was to write a "missing" story left out of Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio*, imitating as closely as possible Anderson's own techniques and style.

## BABIES

*Beckie Jackson*

She sat like a dome, overlapping her small chair. When she walked, it was slow and deliberate, as though the weight of her body might press her to the floor. Mattie Ham had been old for a long time. Her white hair sprang wildly from her head and her face caved in where her teeth were missing. Her hands were dry and cracked from years of hard labor.

"My baby's gone, gone away. He'll never come home to me again," she said to anyone who would listen. Her youngest had gone to sea. "He'll be back, Mama, wait and see," cooed Angel, her baby girl. "You have to remember, he's a grown man now. He may not want to stay in Winesburg, but he'll come back to visit us. You really should open the curtains and let some light in here."

All her life Mattie had been busy; it takes a lot of work to raise nine children. There had been wash to do, clothes to mend, suppers to cook and beds to make. She had worked hard to rear her children right so they wouldn't grow up and turn to drink like their daddy. Now they were all grown and didn't need Mattie any more. Joe, the oldest, was a preacher; Sam, the middle boy, had gone into banking. All the girls were married now and were busy raising their own families. Angel was the only one of them still living in Winesburg. Mattie lived all alone in a big house still haunted by the sound of children's laughter. Sometimes she awoke with a start, thinking she had heard the words "Mama, Mama," coming from her bedside. Of course, there was no one in the dark house but her.

At Christmas and Easter all the children and grandchildren would come to visit. Mattie would stay up all night cooking a ham, a turkey, and a dozen pies. The children could never stay long; after dinner they would rise to go. "Sorry we have to rush off, love you," they called over their shoulders. "That's O.K., I'm tired anyway. I need a nap," Mattie always replied.

When she was a young woman, Mattie had moved to Cleveland. There Mattie worked in a book bindery. She lived in a boarding house with other women her age. The young women talked and laughed more than Mattie thought necessary. She had little to do with them. Mattie was content to retire with one of the books from the bindery. In the pages of those books, she could become a fairy princess or a terrible old hag.

Mattie fell in love when she was twenty-two. She had ridden the train home from Cleveland for a visit and was waiting for her brother, Bill, to pick her up at the railway station. She had been waiting for an hour and was beginning to get impatient when a young man emerged from behind the building. He was handsome and cleanshaven. The sight of Mattie seemed to draw him. He introduced himself as Jack Ham and said he was a traveling salesman working out of Winesburg. He offered to wait with her. Another hour passed without her brother coming. Bill had been waylaid by a pretty farm girl; he was in no hurry to make his escape. Jack offered to take Mattie home. She accepted his ride and their courtship began. By winter, Jack and Mattie were married. They settled in Winesburg; she had come home to have his babies. The babies came, one after another, like doorsteps. Mattie was busy changing diapers and saw less and less of Jack. He had taken to drinking with his friends, sometimes not coming home until dawn. One cold winter morning Sylvester West found Jack in the alley behind the drugstore in a pool of cheap whiskey, dead. Mattie was alone with nine little children.

Mattie had centered her life around her children; now that her task was done she didn't know what to do with herself. She spent most of her days in bed, thinking of her life and what it had been. Mattie seldom went outside; the apple trees she had once tended with care now grew only small twisted fruit. Her roses had wilted and formed a border of thorns across the front of the house. Weeds and brambles had overtaken the grass beneath her bedroom window. Mattie no longer walked there; she was fearful of snakes.

Mattie slept in a small bedroom in the big house. The corners were filled with dust and cobwebs that she no longer fought. Alone in her bedroom, Mattie would lie on the narrow bed that sat centered under her small window. A thin shaft of light fell on her face. She held her hands in front of her eyes and thought of all the work they had done scrubbing diapers and spooning mush into babies' mouths. Mattie was afraid that she would die alone in her bed; maybe she wouldn't be found for days, even weeks. She had a picture in her mind of Angel finding her half-decayed body. She wouldn't coo then. Mattie would show them, she'd show them all. Leave their Mama all alone. That's what they deserved, a rotting corpse.

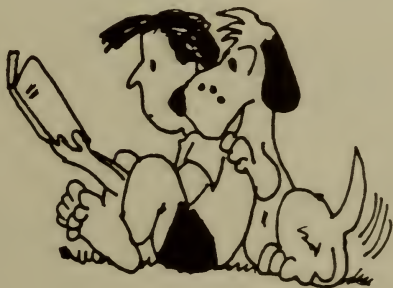
She couldn't die yet. She had things to say to people. She had to tell people that there was no love in the world, only vanities. "I know a thing or two. I could write a book," she told herself. "No you couldn't, people wouldn't understand. They wouldn't want to know. No one would listen to you," she countered. Rain fell from the sky wetting the land just as Mattie's tears wet her pillow. A grey shadow seemed to hang over the world, but when she looked out the window, Mattie saw sunshine on the lot next door. "I must find a way," she exclaimed. Turning, Mattie tried to grope her way through the darkness. Who could she tell, who could she trust? George Willard! He was the answer. He was respected, people listened to him. If he would write what she knew, everyone would see and believe. She had to see George.

When Angel came on Friday to take her to Hern's for groceries, Mattie had everything all planned. She would go to the *Winesburg Eagle* on the pretense of getting a paper. Once there, she would tell George Willard everything. Pulling on her heavy black coat, she said, "Angel, that paper boy is getting lazy. Twice this month he's thrown my paper in the ditch and you know I'm too heavy to crawl out of there if I went in after it. If you'll just get this list of things I need I'll stop next door and get another paper." She handed Angel a long list that was meant to keep her busy for some time.

Once in town, Mattie hurried over to the *Winesburg Eagle*, Peeping in the window, she saw George alone at his desk. Mattie hurried inside. Her face was red and she was out of breath when George looked up and saw her. He offered her a chair and sat down on the edge of his desk. George was always curious about Mrs. Ham. "She has reared all those children," he thought. "She ought to know a thing or two."

Mattie seemed excited, as though she might explode if she didn't speak. "Yes, Mrs. Ham, is there something I can do for you?" George asked.

"I had to see you," she said, catching her breath. "I had to tell you." She paused, then said, "My baby's gone, gone away." With a heavy sigh, she stood and trudged out of the office.



## IN THE OPEN

In India the farmer has his rope bed  
Out in the middle of his wheat fields,  
Wary of stray bullocks and thieves.  
He tears down the canal wall weekly  
To inundate his tilled domain.  
The goshawk harries then takes a rat  
After some battle. The man walls-up again.  
His evening prayers are haunted  
With wisps of wheat  
And the goshawk's return.

In the countryside a man keeps vigil.  
He breaks open the canal,  
flooding his space,  
helping hawks hunt. His meditation is  
a mandala of gusty folds,  
like strains of a tugged web.  
He listens at night with a single eye,  
his own atonement in the breeze.

the land grows  
a man appears with the seasons  
sowing watering and nurturing  
grain mice and birds  
eternally  
floating at night on his raft  
the moonlit waves lap into the stars

*Henry Brandt*





## A TOAST AND A CRUCIFIX

*Michael West*

The envelope was small and plain; your average everyday envelope, but it stuck out like a sore thumb. What really caught my eye was the return address. The letter was addressed to me, Clark Weatherly, and had come all the way from Pittsburgh from a guy named George Belkrey.

George and I attended high school together and during those four brief years had become as close as two friends could become. We developed a wonderful friendship which included Alan Chandler and Bob Zachary, two other high school mates of ours, and consisted in part of a weekly weekend ritual of laying ruin to our hometown and nearby areas. Incidentally, Alan was killed in an automobile accident about three years ago; Bob is doing time in the state prison for embezzling from the real estate agency for which he once worked. George and I are the only ones from our little clique who still have the freedom to enjoy the many oddities of life. Bob had a choice; Alan, unfortunately, didn't. So naturally, I was happy to hear from George, who wanted me to come up to Pittsburgh and spend a few days with him reminiscing and having a general all-around good time, doing God knows what.

\* \* \* \* \*

A few days had passed since I received George's letter, and in the meantime I had purchased a round-trip airplane ticket to Pittsburgh and packed up the necessities for the trip. My wife and three kids drove me down to the airport and saw me off to Pittsburgh and a weekend that promised to be unforgettable.

Long, dull airplane trips, like this one, are really made worthwhile when you give yourself a chance to reminisce and frolic in your daydreams of years gone by: all the good times, the bad times, and, every once in a while, the dull times. Somehow they all play a part in everybody's past.

But if you're not careful, you'll start asking yourself things like "*Why couldn't this have happened?*" or "*Why aren't things like that now?*" That's when you have to get a grip on yourself; you want things to be like they used to be, but they can't. Asking yourself *why* just wastes those wonderful memories. That's when I had to shake my head and wake myself up and try to just keep thinking about "the good ol' times," as they are more commonly referred to.

My friends and I had many of those "good times." But the one that stands out in my mind the most is a warm summer night in 1970:

Summer was just beginning and we decided to get together and have a little fun. We were going to head up the coast a little ways to this small town with a great little beach which proved to be a pretty active place. George had purchased a bottle of whiskey and some Coke. (He later told me that the booze was to wash down the awful taste of the Coke.) I was never a drinker, so I almost always drove; I didn't mind it because the guys always kept me well entertained.

When we arrived at this little tropical haven, Alan and I somehow got separated from George and Bob, so we spent a good portion of the night just wandering the beach looking for some excitement. George and Bob had taken the whiskey and the Coke with them, so it was a sober evening for me and Alan.

The night rolled on and Alan and I were thoroughly convinced that there was absolutely nothing to do down there that night. So we decided to go find George and Bob and head back home. It had been a good three hours since we had lost them, so the task was not going to be easy. "Where in the hell do we start looking?" I asked Alan, who probably knew better than I where to look for two effervescent young men who were probably drunk out of their minds.

"Start at all the bars on the island. If they're not in any of those, we better contact the Coast Guard; the idiots probably tried to swim to the Bahamas."

So we began our journey of good fate -- in and out of every little drink-and-die joint on the island in desperate hopes of finding our missing comrades. The thought that they might be off in some sleazy, cockroach-infested motel putting their very masculinity to the test did cross my mind, but the chances of that being the case were slim to none, especially in the physical condition they were probably in. So I said nothing, and we continued on our little trek.

About an hour and a half later, Alan spotted Bob walking around in a daze, as he normally did, looking like he was in search of someone or something. Bob returned Alan's glance and started charging at us, screeching to a halt just in front of us. "Where the hell have ya'll been? I've been looking all over for you for the last few hours," Bob said, the stench of alcohol emitting from his mouth with every syllable he spoke. "Where've we been? Where've you been?" It was then that I noticed that Bob was missing somebody. "And where's George?"

"Just follow me," Bob replied. Famous last words.

Bob led us to the sand dunes halfway down the beach. "Okay, I know he's somewhere around here," Bob told us.

"Somewhere around where?" Alan asked irritably.

"Somewhere around here . . . on this dune. Or was it down on sixth street?" Obviously, Bob didn't know where either George, or he, was.

I then noticed that Bob had a black eye, the bruised skin around his eye shining in the moonlight. "What in the hell happened to you? Did you



and George get into a fight?"

"Uh, no, not really."

"What happened?" Alan interrupted.

"We ran into a couple of girls and -- uh," Bob hesitated; he had this look on his face as if he were ashamed of something he'd done. But that shameful look soon turned into a sneaky little grin, a grin we had all seen before. "I tried a little something with one of them and she took it personally. She got ticked off, slapped my head around a couple a' times, took off her shoe and hit me in the eye with it. Those damn high heels hurt like hell. I wasn't gonna take that crap so I told her and her friend to get lost." All these years, I've been told that Bob was in prison for embezzlement; I know better. He's doing time, all right, but I'm sure you can blame it on those hormones of his.

But Alan and I got a kick out of it; not the fact that he had tried to violate the sacred person of the poor little girl, but the fact tht he had gotten slapped around -- again. Things like that were always happening to Bob . . . and he always deserved them. Bob was a pretty nice guy, it's just that he somehow managed to say the wrong things at the right time -- and he always paid for it. Now he's really paying for it.

After Alan and I got our little kick, we started searching for our fallen comrade. Somehow I managed to get separated from Alan and Bob. It was getting pretty late (or early, I should say) and walking around on the beach all by myself in the early morning hours of a summer day was not my idea of having fun. I was beginning to get thoughts of coming back in the morning in the hopes that daylight would assist us in finding our lost amigo, or that the tide would wash him back ashore, if it had carried him out to sea.

Just as I was about to give up all hope of recovering George, I stumbled over something: a large, bulky object which didn't budge when I tripped over it. Lying on the ground, my mouth full of sand, I looked behind me to see what it was that had tripped me up.

And there he was: an empty bottle of Jim Beam in his right hand, seaweed in his left. Somewhere in between his two hands, in the middle of his face, was the world's most idiotic, and intoxicated, grin. He lay there spread-eagle on top of the sand dune, as if he were about to be crucified for the sake of mankind. George had been recovered.

Just one glance at his gloss-coated face should've told me that there was no way that he was going to walk. But I let my exhaustion get the best of me and tried to stand him up. I tugged at the dead weight and finally stood him up. Trying to balance him out, I gave him a little nudge forward from his back. Unfortunately, I gave him too much of a nudge and George went crashing to the ground, without breaking his fall, face first. I turned him over and there was a red pool of blood spewing from his nose. I'd broken the poor kid's nose. I didn't feel too bad, though, because I knew he couldn't feel it. Not yet, anyway.

So we lay there: me, the sea oats, and George. Some time passed,



and George started to stir. He glanced at me with bloodshot and dilated eyes and asked, "Clark? Clark, is that you?"

"Yeah, George."

"Where the hell am I?"

"On the beach somewhere," I informed him.

"Oh," he replied. He hesitated and asked, "Where'd all this blood come from?"

"You broke your nose."

"Oh." This was the easiest conversation I'd ever had with anyone, except maybe with my four-year-old.

"Jesus, I feel like I've been stepped on," the human winery said. With that, he gave out a thunderous belch that would've made a sailor blush. He kept sipping the air out of that empty bottle, but nothing would come out. He was sucking the life out of that poor whiskey bottle, like an infant with a pacifier. Frustrated and confused, he shattered the bottle into a million tiny pieces against a nearby rock. "I can't take this crap anymore," he declared angrily. "If I don't slow down, I'll be dead before I'm thirty-five. I gotta slow down."

"Yeah, as soon as there's a cold day in hell," I said doubtfully.

"No, I mean it. I been thinkin'. Ya' know what I'm gonna do?"

"What's that?" I challenged. This was getting pretty interesting.

"I'm gonna be --" he hesitated as he gasped for air and belched again.

"I'm gonna become a priest."

Now that was a dandy. I was totally convinced that the liquor now had complete control of George's bodily functions.

"Then I'm gonna be Pope. Pope George. It's got a nice ring to it, doesn't it?"

"Lovely, your holiness," I responded. George was a devout Catholic, and it kind of shocked me to hear him say stuff like this. It bothered me, but I realized that the guy didn't know what the hell he was saying. "And when I become Pope I'm gonna abolish all those stupid celibacy laws. Screw celibacy! Ha! Didja hear that? A play on words. That way, if I do that, we priests can enjoy life a lot better. Whaddya think?"

"I think you're blitzed. C'mon, we gotta get you to a hospital. Let's find Bob and Alan."

\* \* \* \* \*

We found Bob and Alan a short time later. By the time we got George to the hospital and back home, it was about four o'clock in the morning, just in time for breakfast. Looking back at it now, that was a real memorable evening. Those were the kinds of things that George and I were going to talk about. Somehow, though, it would be a little more enjoyable if Alan and Bob were around. But Alan wrapped his Volkswagen Rabbit around an oak tree just down the road from my house a few years ago. I'm

still reminded of the twisted heap of steel and shattered, splintered glass every time I pass that tree. The police said it was an accident: I have my doubts. They never found any skid marks. And just the week before, Alan had come to me with something on his mind. He wasn't making much sense, so I was unable to quite grasp what was bugging him. Whatever it was, it died with him. I just wish I could have helped him.

I hoped my visit with George would help me clear things up and enable me to understand them a little better. As my plane landed in Pittsburgh, I was becoming more and more optimistic each second. The crowd of people exited the airplane and made its way towards the baggage claim area. While I was waiting for my bags, I felt a hand grab my right shoulder and heard a familiar voice call my name. I turned around and there was George.

"Clark, how've ya' been?" he said.

"Just great, how about -- " I stopped. There was something peculiar about George. It was the way he was dressed. Everything he was wearing was the same color -- a deep, thick, midnight black. His shoes, his jacket, his shirt, his socks, everything. Then I noticed a -- a white collar, just a little square of white at the base of his adam's apple, and a shiny silver crucifix dangling from around his neck. George was wearing the apparel of a Roman Catholic priest.

"What the hell is this? Some sort of bad joke?" I asked.

"No, it's no joke. I told you in my letter that we had a lot to talk about."

"Yeah, but I didn't know you changed on me! Why didn't you tell me in the letter?"

"If I'd done that, you wouldn't have come up here, and you know it. I thought that it would be better if I told you in person. I guess I was wrong."

"Damn right you're wrong!" I roared.

"I guess you're kind of upset."

"Upset?!" I yelled. "Of course I'm upset! Man, oh man, George. How could -- I mean -- " I caught myself stammering in disbelief, searching for something to say. "You didn't expect me not to be upset, did you?"

"Well . . . , " George was stammering as well. "I . . . uh . . . I was hoping you would accept it. I guess I was wrong."

With that, we both fell silent; not a word was said for what seemed like an eternity. George was obviously just as upset as I was, at least I thought so. Hell, he had to be; here I was, his best friend on the face of the earth, and I was chastising him for a decision he'd made about his life, a decision that I thought stunk to hell and back. This was the biggest shock of my life. Over and over, I kept picturing George on the beach that night just sucking the air out of that bottle. Finally, George broke the silence. "Well, are you still going to stay, or are you flying back?"

I didn't know what to say at first, but I realized that if I stayed, there might be a chance that we could clear a few things up. "Yeah, I guess I

might as well stay," I said, the reluctance showing in my voice. "It'd be a waste of a plane ticket to just turn around and go straight back."

So we grabbed my luggage and made our way to "Father George's" car. His car! A Chrysler K-car, the epitome of a priest's car. Not only did George wear priests' clothes, he even had the audacity to drive around in one of their cars. The reality was beginning to sink in.

I kept thinging back to our most memorable night and how it had turned out to be so hauntingly prophetic. Back then, I was really convinced that it was the booze doing all of George's talking for him, but now I was convinced that George had known exactly what he was saying that night. I wondered if he still planned to abolish the celibacy rules when he became Pope. Probably not. The old George, maybe, but not this one. This new George had completely ousted the old one.

And it showed in everything he did that weekend: the way he ate breakfast, the way he read the newspaper, the television shows he watched with the other two priests of the parish, the way he drove his car. They were all typical of the new George, the stranger I had met in Pittsburgh. The most exciting thing we did was go to an art museum. Yeah, the old George was gone, all right, and I was heartbroken. First Bob gets thrown in jail, then Alan wraps his car around an oak tree, and now George has gone and given himself to the church. When would this madness end?

\* \* \* \* \*

It was Sunday morning, and I was packing my junk, getting ready to leave town, the weekend, and the guy that had drastically changed my outlook on life. While I was packing, George came into my room. "Hey, Clark. You got a second?"

"Yeah." I really didn't feel like talking. "Yead, I guess so."

"I think we need to talk," he said.

"About what?"

"What do you think? I really want to try and get things cleared up before you go. If you go without talking about it, we'll probably never talk to each other again."

"Maybe, maybe not. That's just a chance we'll have to take." There was a great deal of undisguised hostility in my voice.

"Well, I'm not going to take that chance," he replied. "I'm going to say what I have to say. If you don't want to listen, fine. I'll feel a lot better knowing that I at least tried. And if you think that I'm ---"

"Why, George?" I blurted out. "What in the hell made you do it?"

George was shocked. I don't think he expected me to ask him that, but I had to know. "I don't know exactly," he started. "I think it was a combination of things. Mainly because of the life I was living. All of that drinking, all of those parties . . . They were just getting to me. I really didn't have a future; I was flunking out of school, always getting into trouble



with anyone and everyone. I could hear people talk about me behind my back. They didn't know I could hear them, but I did." George was starting to get a little misty-eyed. "They'd always say stuff like 'There goes that kid George Belkrey. He's never gonna amount to anything.' Stuff like that really got to me. And you know, they were right. I was getting nothing out of life, just wasting away. I wanted to prove them wrong, but I just didn't know how. It was like I was given this bottle of life and it -- it was -- empty." He sniffled a little, wiped his nose with his bare hand, and hung his head down. I was getting a little misty-eyed myself. George looked back up, grinned through his red eyes, and said in the old smart-ass voice that I grew up with: "I have seeyun th' light/" He sounded just like some backwoods faith healer. Then he forced a chuckle, to which I responded with a chuckle of my own, and we embraced each other, symbolizing an end to our little feud.

\* \* \* \* \*

In the weeks since I'd been back home, I hadn't been to church once. Sure, George and I settled our differences, but I was still in a state of shock. It was as if my entire memory of the gang's times together had been rewritten. My views of our past together had been completely reversed, and I was pretty damned depressed. After all, a man is entitled to a memory of what really happened in his "glory days"; his memory shouldn't be impeded in any way. But mine had been, and I didn't know what to do.

Then a parcel came for me. It was from George. I tore into it and discovered a bottle of Jim Beam whiskey and a drinking mug. Taped to the bottle of whiskey was a small note. I unfolded the note and read it:

Clark:

I thought you might need this. Lord knows I did. I've been feeling pretty crappy since you left, so I went out and got a bottle of this stuff and got blitzed. It really helped me readjust, and besides, it felt pretty good to do that again after all these years. It won't happen again, though. I know you've never been drunk before, so do it just this once. Get shit-faced for the gang . . . just this once.

Assistingly,  
The Padre

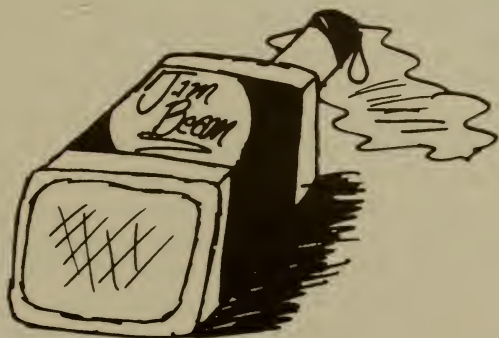
PS: Down with celibacy and don't throw up on the rug.

The old George wasn't completely dead after all.

That night, I took the whiskey, the mug, and a picture of the old gang into my den. I asked my wife and kids to please not bother me; I said I



had a lot of work to do. I later confessed to my wife what I had done behind that locked door. I told her about my night-long toast to the "good old days" and to the gang, a toast that, miraculously, helped me rediscover the past, and reconcile myself to the way things are now. I also told my wife how I didn't throw up once, or if I did, how I didn't remember it. Nor did I remember how the picture came to be broken, but it was. I woke up the next morning and stepped on some slivers of glass which had come from the shattered frame of my old picture. I didn't think twice about dumping the frame into the garbage, picture and all.



## LOVE POEM

Moaned the woefully lonely soul  
in this his most incomprehensibly & agonizingly  
unique (though not extraordinary)  
lifelong saga of pathological pathos  
(over in less than the blink of an eye),  
"Why must love be like  
a candle

all at once beckoning  
with its promise of  
passionflames & poetry  
and yet -  
damning,  
because no one can ever  
quite  
find  
the  
perfect match?"

*Andy Pena*

## SISTER MARGARITA

*Nena Lumler*

"Do you think Jesus or your Grandpa Sheinfeld up in heaven would approve of what you did today during mass? Do you think your behavior was Christian? What will your mother, the poor soul, do? We may have to get special dispensation for you to start First Confession a year early. Are you proud of yourself? Young man, what do you have to say for yourself?"

I thought maybe I was going through minnowpause, except that was for ladies and a lot older, too. But I was all hot and feverish-like and my heart was beatin so hard I thought Sr. Margarita would take to me, seein as I had a condition, or at least was getting one. But she didn't. She just kept lookin meaner and meaner till finally she looked just like one of those people in the movies who saws up people like me. I thought I'd have to stand there forever like they did, with that dozey look and with my mouth bobbin like a float on a fishin pole. I thought I was gonna pee or throw up or faint, or maybe all three, but instead I let out a monstrous loud yell and took off running. Well, I did pee a little.

"Patrick Shane Donovan!" Her voice got louder with every name till she sounded like Ma, and I just kept runnin and yellin till I grabbed the handlebar of the merry-go-round and started to pull it around behind me, yellin the whole time. I guess I was hopin it would fly off in space with me on it, I dunno. My hands were hot and sweaty and only the rust on the bar was keepin them from slidin off. The rust was diggin into my hands and stingin something fierce. I threw myself on the floor of the merry-go-round and got sand in my mouth from between the ridges of the floor. I stopped yellin long enough to spit and see Sr. Margarita hitch up her habit and jump on the merry-go-round even better than Billy Bob O'Leary could. She went for me but I ducked past her and we both just sorta went flyin off, at least till we wiped out in the sand, rollin over and over each other till I got rolled up in her habit and thought I might drown in black polyester. I knew then that I shoulda left her alone, she was too much nun for me. I had gotten away with plenty at St. Francis' Love His Little Creatures, but I should've left it at tucking Sr. Mary Ignatius' habit into her drawers at the Halloween party. They had threatened to send me to Mary Magdalene Show Them The Way - at least that way I'd still been alive tomorrow. Sr. Margarita was unswaddling me so as finally I could breathe. I was too wore out to try to escape her. I just laid there and waited for her to come swoopin down on me, quotin God. I figured she'd pick "Vengeance Is Mine" or "Suffer Little Children." I heard a little giggle and then I heard a laugh - a big, happy laugh. I looked up and

it was Sr. Margarita. Her veil was half off and her curly black hair was wild like mine before Ma dippity-doe'd it. Her eyes were crinkled up from laughin so hard and I realized she weren't so old as most nuns, or so ugly either. I felt real sorry I had Crazy-glued her habit to the pew, and I told her so.

"I know, honey." We giggled and she held my hand. "Come on, we can make it to the Nativity Pageant."

Things were crazy at the stage. Angela Fulpot was throwing up like she did every year. Sr. Mary Ignatius pushed Sr. Margarita to the control panel and threw me my head angel hospital gown. A camel hiney bumped around looking for its front half. Sr. Angelica put on my flying halter and hooked the guide wire to my drawers. I worked on my holy faced in Lisa Wolensky's shiny wings while the play started. I grinned and felt might proud that I had been head angel 3 times, ever since first grade when Eugene Grime was supposed to be it but his mom wouldn't let him fly. I could feel being head angel so much was starting to rub off. Then I saw a pair of sunglasses and I had to put them on the camel as it was going onstage. All suddenlike it was my turn to go up, so I lifted my head up and rolled my eyes back and stuck my arms out in my very best holy look that had made me head angel all 3 years. Yep. I was flyin over the stage, almost to the seats part, when I could feel the guide wire slippin and I realized my drawers weren't near where they was meant to be. Yep - that Sr. Margarita was way too much nun for me.





## Flapjack John

A flapjack fancier named Welsh  
Had savorings he could not squelch.  
Sour-cream drizzled and berried,  
Marmaladed, syruped, and cherried  
Those hotcakes unveiled a gourmand--  
In John of flapjacks so fond.

*Robert Strozier*



## WINTER PANES

She gazes through narrow gloomy glass  
panes greyed by winter sludge.

White as plastic picnic plates,  
the snowflakes stack  
upon barren ground into heaps,  
cold clumps of pain.

Desolate and alone too,  
the naked cedar stands  
locked into the earth by  
roots, webbed.

Flakes form and fade, like tears  
beneath a pretty programmed mask.  
One carefully crafted flake catches  
light and melts;

squares of glass frame the picture  
like a photograph.  
Popcorn powder swirling softly,  
circles still.

Warm, white, and gossamer, they lie,  
refracting prisms of gold  
in mounds of hush  
to breathe a fluting song.

Clouds, cold and grey, persuade  
frozen flakes to cover  
and seep between the stolid cracks  
of windows without wills.

Angry panes shrink  
to bury her inside.

*Milly Butler*

## A Holiday Puzzle

At the turn of the year,  
    as we pause to reflect  
How to polish ourselves  
    or to patch a defect,

Does it ever occur  
    that some part of the blame  
For all our confusion  
    and terrible aim

Is not ours at all?  
    But confirms the old rumor  
That God has a rippingly  
    wry sense of humor.

Which could even explain  
    the best riddle I know:  
Why a feast is so fast  
    when a fast is so slow!

*Roger Warlick*



If you are interested in working on the 1988 *Calliope* staff, or in submitting work for consideration in that edition, please contact Dr. Richard Raymond in the Department of Languages, Literature, and Dramatic Arts, 115-D, Gamble Hall. *Calliope* welcomes prose, poetry, and non-fiction work in all fields, as well as photographs and sketches. All pieces submitted must be the work of students, staff, or faculty members of Armstrong State College. Work should be submitted by the end of Fall Quarter for best chance of publication. Please be sure that your name, phone number, and address accompany each submission.











*Calliope*  
*1988*

Cover by Mary Alsten Johnson

# CALLIOPE

Volume Five  
Spring 1988

Editors: *Andy Pena*  
*Ginger Carver*

Faculty Advisor: *Richard Raymond*

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Last but not least, we must thank those individuals who took the time to submit some fine poetry, prose, and artwork, which are the heart and soul of Calliope. Our only regret is that we had neither time nor space enough to include all that was submitted.

Again, many heart-felt thanks...

Andy Pena Ginger  
Carver



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## GALLANTRY

By: Ginger Brown

The gloom and dreariness of the bitter cold October night and the unseasonably early snow which blanketed Winesburg was felt by no one as fiercely as Emily Johnson. The numbing cold and the tiresome journey from the Johnsons' farm had dulled her senses and depleted her frail body of warmth and energy. The burdening weight of her weather-beaten coat and the anguish of her evening's journey made her desire to lie down on the carpet of glistening whiteness and sleep. But, the shrill whistle of a speeding freight train awakened her senses and mustered the remainder of her energy. With her frayed satchel in hand, she bravely strove onward to her destination — the depot.

Each step was painfully necessary; the propelling force which thrust the petite traveler onward through the freezing darkness was escapement. As she trudged along, Emily pondered her predicament. She knew she had no choice but to run away from home and to seek passage on the morning train. It would deliver her safely from Winesburg and from the clutches of her father's sporadic fits of drunken rage. She had no particular destination in mind and knew not what awaited her. She only knew that she must get away from her Poppa Luke's drinking sprees and his half insane fits of temper. This night, he had struck her badly with his heavy stick.

Her father, Luther Johnson, raised her from infancy to her present age of fifteen. She was his only child, and his only living relative. After Emily's birth, which claimed the life of her mother, her father's grief gradually turned to embitterment. Fate had deprived him of his loving wife and had burdened him with the responsibility of an unwanted child. Therefore, he often turned to the habit of drowning his disillusionments with large quantities of whiskey.

Luther Johnson was a huge man who bore the distinct characteristics of a backwoodsman. He wore a dilapidated buckskin jacket which reminded him of better times and places. Although he farmed the land for a living, his soul yearned to be back hunting and trapping in the forest. It was a hunting accident which had rendered him partially lame and necessitated the use of a heavy walking stick. His interior was just as rough and unpolished as his exterior. No one knew whether it was the pain from his accident, or the pain of his grief, which had permanently twisted his mouth into a snarl.

On rare occasions, only when necessity prompted, Luther and his young daughter came into Winesburg for supplies. The folks in the town avoided conversation with the old farmer, for he was unfriendly to the point of being rude. There was no doubt in anyone's mind that Luther preferred the solitude of his farm to that of the noisy city.

However, everyone felt compassion for his dark haired lovely

daughter who sat dutifully at his side on the wagon seat and who walked obligatorily in his shadow through the streets of town. She would glance up at everyone who passed, as if searching for someone or something. Her large dark eyes, which reflected an inner loneliness, sparkled shyly from behind the long fringes of her straggly bangs — much like a prisoner peering at the outside world through the bars of a jail cell.

The hour was getting late; it was past nine o'clock as Emily reached the outskirts of town. She treaded softly over the slushy grooves embedded in the ice-covered dirt road at the intersection of Buckeye and Main streets. After such a long and horrendous hike, Emily was totally numb from the cold and weary to the point of exhaustion. As she passed the office of the Winesburg Eagle, she barely observed the glow of light from the printshop's window which illuminated her path through the street. Nor did she notice the newswriter sitting inside the office, busy at his task of writing a late story for the next edition. She trudged slowly down Main Street toward the depot where she hoped to find shelter and wait out the night. However, as she passed Hern's Grocery, she halted suddenly in her tracks and stood perfectly still — not from the cold, but from fright. Up ahead, she made out a large figure of a lame man moving steadily in her direction. He carried a large stick in one hand and a lantern in the other. "Poppa Luke! Oh God, no," she gasped. She managed a shrill scream which momentarily pierced the quietness of the night, but which was followed by silence again as the traveler fainted and fall to the icy ground.

Deserting his night watchman's duties, Hop Higgins hobbled over and bent down to turn his lantern to reveal the girl's pale face. George Willard ran out of the printshop so quickly that he forgot his overcoat. Shivering from the sudden coldness, George gently lifted the girl up into the curve of his arm. "What in blue thunder is a young girl doing out on a night such as this? Isn't she old Johnson's kid? Why did she scream like that?" Hop Higgins demanded. Ignoring the endless barrage of questions, George told him, "Go get Dr. Reefy and tell him to come quickly to the hotel. I'm taking her there now; this girl is quite ill."

Carrying the girl's limp body in his arms, George Willard threw open the front door to the New Willard House. The sleepy-eyed "night clerk," alarmed by the sudden rush, sprang from his chair. George instructed the boy to fetch clean linens and prepare the bed in the now-vacant room which had once belonged to his mother, Elizabeth Willard. George remembered that Aunt Elizabeth Swift had stripped the bed when the room had been closed off after his mother's passing. It was a comfortable room in a quiet corner of the house, and her comfort and recovery was foremost on his mind.

As the early morning sun broke through the gray horizon, the tired

doctor emerged from the sick girl's room. Anxious to learn of the girl's condition, George waited patiently in the hallway. He and Dr. Reefy stood and talked together just outside the room. This time, the prognosis was good. Dr. Reefy told George, "She's awake now but still weak. She's got to stay put for a while. I've given her medication to speed her recovery right along, and Mrs. Swift says he will stay and tend her until her strength returns. You did right in bringing her straight here, George. Much longer out in that weather — well, who knows what her condition might have been. She could have died out there. By the way, George, in case you didn't recognize her, her name is Emily Johnson. She wants to thank you for your kindness."

Later that same day, an exhausted George Willard decided to look in on the patient. He knocked lightly on the door; Aunt Elizabeth Swift greeted him and led him over to where the frail girl sat in a chair by the window. The evening sun cast a pale glow over the motionless figure. A pillow was propped under her head, and her long dark hair draped over the edge. Her delicate hands lay folded in her lap as if in prayer. "We've been watching the snow starting to fall again. Looks like we might be in for a long winter," Aunt Elizabeth said softly. As for Emily, she was unaware of George's visit — she had dozed off into a peaceful sleep.

George stood for a moment and looked out the window. Darkness was descending rapidly upon Winesburg, and off in the distance he heard the faint wailing whistle of the departing evening train. A queer feeling of urgency swept over him as if he needed to take off running through the fresh snow.

## A CHILD'S PICTURE

as a mother stands  
at the sink  
washing dishes

her little  
blond haired  
girl sits

not  
watching tv  
but drawing:

a red  
dog  
standing

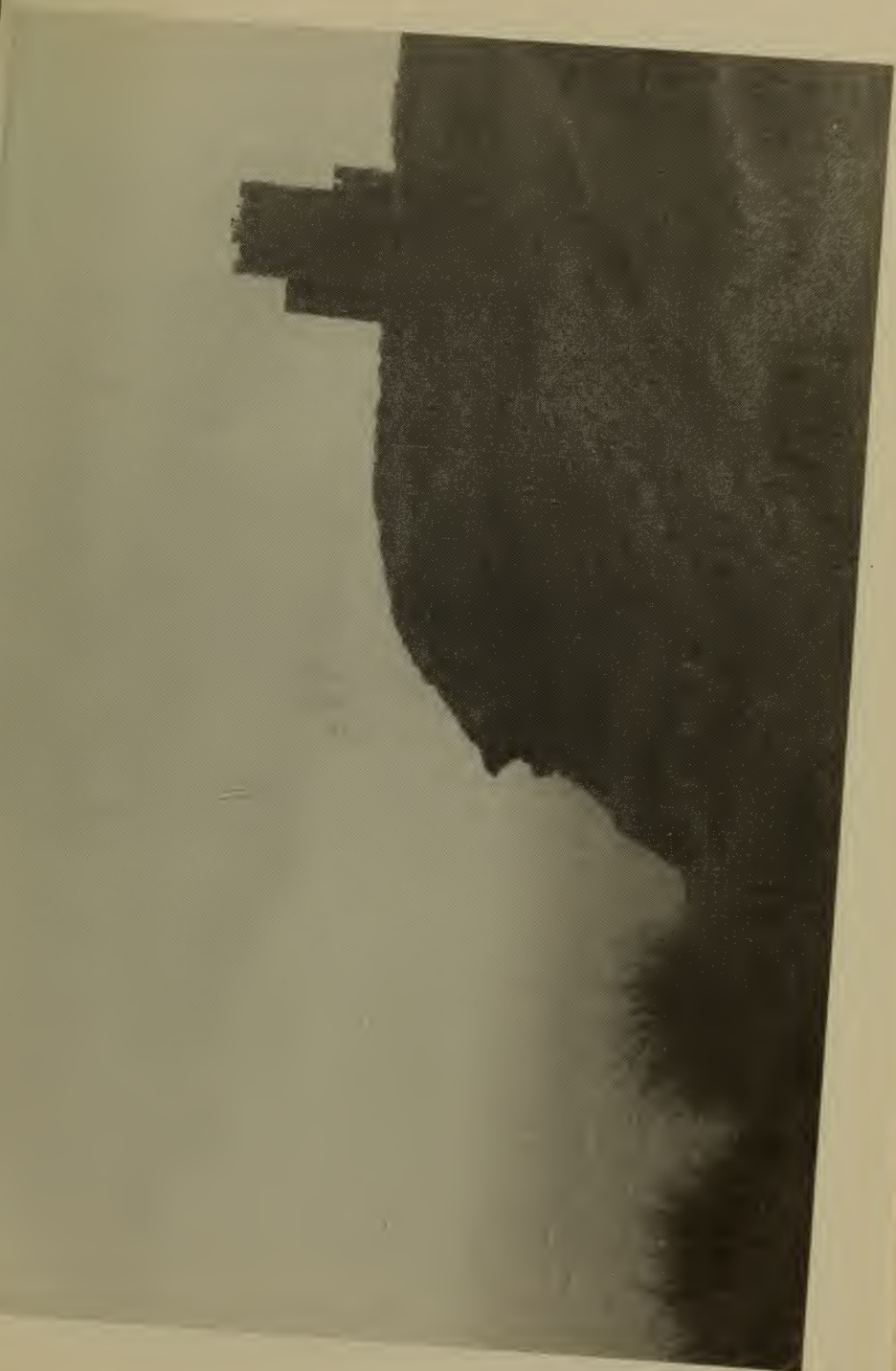
beside a brown  
tree  
with a girl

who has yellow  
hair  
playing peacefully

under  
the setting orange  
sun

Maureen Lucey





## THOUGHTS ON MARIJUANA

By: Katie Hill

I had my first experience with marijuana at the age of five. The year was 1970, so the Time of Troubles was going full swing, and my brother, Kirk, a high school senior, had invited his friend Bill to visit our family during a short leave from the Army.

Our guest arrived bearing gifts for everyone; mine was a tiny heart of faux pearls suspended from a slender gold chain. Even though Bill had hung around our house for several years before graduating and getting drafted, the necklace really opened my eyes— I had fallen in love before he had even managed to lug his dirty, bulging duffel bag up the stairs to Kirk's room. From then on, I clung to Bill's heels like a squishy piece of bubble gum.

That first day, Kirk, Bill, and I worked on cars, ate at Hardee's with all their old friends, then took in the latest James Bond picture at the drive-in. Bill actually seemed glad to have me along. He let me sit in his lap, insisted on buying my popcorn, and even fixed my pigtail ribbons when they came untied. Best of all, he called me "Hell on Wheels", which I knew had to be a tremendous compliment because of the way everyone laughed and agreed with him. I had never been so happy in my life, and I imagined that this was how things would be all the time after Bill and I were married.

The next morning, worn out from the previous day's adventures, I overslept and wound up washing clothes with Mama instead of going to Road Atlanta with Kirk and Bill. I was absolutely desolate about it until my mother announced her intention of washing "every article in that filthy, old duffel bag." Here was my chance to perform my first act as Bill's future wife!

Between the two of us, Mama and I were able to tug, shove, and roll the bag containing all Bill's earthly belongings down the stairs and into the laundry room. I burned my palms trying to pull open the rope ties that bound the end to the duffel bag before finally sitting down on the floor and reaching into the small hole to reverently clutch Bill's shirts, socks, pants, and T-shirts and hand them carefully, one at a time, to Mama so she could put them in the washing machine. The last thing in the bottom of the bag was a nasty, dirt-encrusted pair of dark blue denim overalls. Mama helped me yank them out and made an awful face as she stuffed the smelly things in the washer. She threw in three tablets of Salvo detergent, half a box of Arm and Hammer, and sprayed in some Lysol, then turned on the warm water and closed the lid. I meant to stay in the laundry room and stand guard, but she coaxed me away with a trip to the grocery store.

We returned home an hour later to find the laundry room, kitchen, and den an inch deep in soapy water. Mama turned off the washing

machine, and we went to work, mopping and sopping up the mess.

When Daddy got home, he checked out the washer and decided the drain had somehow stopped up, forcing all the water to leak out of the machine. He put on some old clothes and prepared to clean out the drain and try to figure out what Mama and I had done to tear up the thing. I sat on the dryer, banging my heels against the sides as I waited to see what had happened, and Mama stood on her toes to peer over Daddy's shoulder.

For a minute, we were all puzzled by the wads of gunk Daddy dumped out of the piece of hose he had disconnected. I thought it looked like wet catnip or maybe used chewing tobacco. Mama said, "That Bill is such a dirty boy! He must have rolled in freshly mown-grass! I'll bet all this stuff came out of those old overalls of his!"

Daddy opened his mouth to say something but was cut off by Kirk's "Je-sus Christ!"

None of us had heard my brother come in through the kitchen door, so intent were we upon the washing machine's revelation. He leaned against the frame of the laundry room door, looking pale, clammy, and nauseous.

Mama turned around and began a sermon about how unsanitary Bill had been to carry all that grass about for days and days. My brother looked sicker and sicker and finally interrupted quietly, "Mama, don't you know you just washed a fortune worth of Columbian?"

"Columbian what?" Mama and I asked in unison.

Daddy, silent until then, spat out the word as if the very letters of it were poison. "Pot."

Mama's face fell, and she walked out of the laundry room without a word, being careful not to touch Kirk as she passed through the door. Daddy sent me to the yard to play, and for once, I didn't mind going. The tension in that room was more than I could stand.

I sat on my trampoline and did some serious thinking. I knew all about marijuana. My best friend's teenaged brother had been hauled off to reform school for repeated drug possession, and none of us kids had been sorry to see him go. I tried to equate cruddy, mean Joey with my kind, handsome Bill but just couldn't make the connection. I realize now that for the first time in my life, someone I loved and trusted had disappointed me. I thought at the time that the feeling I had was as bad as when my pet mouse, Orville, had died. Now I know it was worse.

After what seemed like hours but was probably only 20 or 30 minutes, I heard Daddy's car back down our steep driveway. I went inside, grabbed my dog by the collar, and took him up to my room to snuggle. As I passed Kirk's closed door, I heard low voices, his and Mama's, but felt too tired to eavesdrop. I curled up on my bed and scratched Charlie's ears until we both fell asleep.

The next thing I knew, Kirk was sitting on the edge of my bed, shaking me awake. He told me supper was almost ready, and when I

asked if he and Bill would be eating with us, he said, "Bill's gone. Daddy took him to the bus station and bought him a ticket back to the Army base."

"Will Daddy ever let him come back?" I asked, seeing my wedding plans go down the drain.

"Daddy says he's welcome here as soon as he decides to straighten up."

I was sure my heart was breaking in two, but Kirk didn't seem to notice. He stared out the window for a few minutes, then said, "Katie, the pot wasn't mine, any of it. I suspected Bill had it, but I didn't smoke it. Do you believe me?"

"Yes," I said honestly. Kirk had never lied to me, so it didn't enter my mind to doubt him.

"Thanks. I just hope Mama and Daddy believe me. They say they do, but I'll never know if maybe, just maybe, they're wondering if I lied. Katie, I did try it once, last year. Let's say I tried it once for both of us. Please don't ever feel like you need to. You won't be missing anything."

"Okay," I said quickly, hoping Kirk would leave me alone to wallow in grief over my shattered romance.

He seemed to sense that I wasn't really paying attention and pressed, "Katie, promise?"

That word caught my interest immediately. Promises were serious business. "Yes, I promise," I vowed solemnly.

Kirk hugged me and went downstairs. After I got out of bed and brushed my hair for supper, I unfastened the heart necklace and placed it gently in the bottom of my jewelry box.

I got over Bill within the week and found a cute little boy at kindergarten to marry. But I never got over seeing Mama sweep her skirt aside as she walked past her own son in the laundry room that day. I can't recall having ever been the least bit tempted to break my promise to Kirk.



## SONG TO A CHILD

Child, before me, you yearned a  
counterpoint  
Of soaring violins when your ear had  
yet to reach  
The tutelage of tubas and the clasps of  
mad staccato.

You perked toward the jangling  
jewelery of crickets,  
Mouthed the cicada's kazoo, threshed  
the golden scales  
Of moon-leaves and inched your hand  
toward stars.

You made a treat the sweet chandeliers  
of branches,  
Hurled plinkers for their boing on the  
steel of ponds,  
And wearing your rosey rapture,  
thawed with the genius  
Of turned logs in the hearth. When the  
new moon appeared,  
You hung your sighs upon its sharp-  
ness:  
All gone, you said.

Am I the burst of sparks  
In his eyes, as once daydreamed,  
Or a shadow, unlike his mould,  
Which ran from clouds? Stumbling  
And bruising, or merely distant,  
I embraced him, stroked his hair,  
Smoothed his brow as little as I dared.

Yet, warbling trails the clinking spoon as I  
take coffee.  
Fetching the paper off the lawn, my heel-  
walk on the stiff  
And crackling frost tickles you to high-  
pitched laughter.  
Inside, the shivering this hard man shrugs  
makes you writhe  
And weep with pain. My remembering eyes  
fight me to answer you.

Let our love be now as it should be, not as it  
was.  
Dwell with me, child, and be my flow against  
the world.  
Extend with violins into my fingers, into my  
words.  
Be the light of my whole life, and I shall sing  
to you  
Of dawns and branches spilt from the beak  
of a golden eagle.

Henry Brandt



## CIRCLES

Circles  
spinning  
faster  
than life

Scars  
left on  
empty  
scarecrows

Eyes  
seeing  
deeper  
than death

Unstrung  
puppets  
dance

Silence  
broken by  
constraint

Dead bones  
carried to the  
promised land

Eyes spinning  
Voices broken  
Unstrung  
scarecrows  
left empty

Steve Ealy



## LISA'S DREAM

By: Anonymous

I dismounted my horse and tied the silver mare to a tall slender pine that stretched out toward infinity. Continuing my journey on foot, I followed the worn path to the glen where I hoped to find what I sought. The ground crackled as my tread broke the dead limbs and needles carpeting the forest floor. Stepping into the glen felt like walking into a Roman arena, only I was facing an unknown opponent. Making my way into the center of the glen, I fought back the urge to tip my hat to some unseen presence — my enigmatic opponent and the host of this game.

The wagon stood in the center of the glen; perhaps this was my opponent. The faded maroon top contrasted with the vibrant green of the grass and the backing of the bottle green of the pines. Hesitating at the bottom of the weather-beaten steps, I ran my eyes over the gypsy wagon for a closer look. Plastered against the sides, handpainted signs announced the occupant's profession as fortune telling. While glinting bits of gold in the spokes, the wooden wheels still held the wagon firmly despite their rotting wood.

Gingerly picking my way up the steps, which surprisingly didn't creak, I grasped the cold brass door knob. While hovering for a moment, I summoned enough courage to turn the knob. The splintered door gave way with a groan of protest. When I stepped into the entrance, I met with a spicy exotic aroma reminiscent of sandlewood. Moving into the candlelit center, I studied my surroundings. Blood-red velvet curtains covered all the walls. Under my feet was a magnificent red and black Persian rug. Scattered across the floor, large silk pillows served as the only furniture, except for the low mahogany table which glowed a reddish hue in the candlelight. On the table sat a pile of oversized cards; hopefully what I sought would be found in these.

Emerging from behind the drapes, the gypsy sauntered towards the table. After lowering herself onto a royal purple pillow, she gestured to the emerald pillow opposite her. Her jasmine perfume cut through the sandlewood like a knife. She then spoke to me in a low, heavy voice. I strained my ears to decipher her words, which masked themselves in a Slavic accent. I replied to her question by saying, "I come here to you seeking knowledge of my future." The gypsy's heavily lidded eyes smoldered as she sat and pondered my answer. "The future is not

always pleasant, as I expect you know," she said. "The future should not always be known to those it involves." I nodded but remained adamant in my request.

Languidly, the gypsy reached out her hand and with her carnelian-tipped fingers turned over the first card from the tarot. The first card laid over the King of Swords, my court card, was the tray of wands while the Page of Swords crossed me. The Fool showed my past and the deuce of cups brought forth my future. And thus went the rest of the Keltic layout. I noticed that with each card the gypsy laid out, the fog, which first entered the wagon with the laying out of my court card, grew thicker so as to obscure the wagon leaving only the gypsy visible. By the time she drew the seventh card, the Ace of Pentacles, the only discernible part of the gypsy was her tapered, red-tipped fingers. Anxiously I waited for the turning of the tenth card, the final outcome, but I could no longer see the wagon the gypsy, her hand, or even the cards. With a gust of wind, the fog was lifted up to the pines surrounding the glen. I found myself standing in the center of the glen alone. Since I no longer fought the urge to tip my hat to the opponent, I did. And in doing so, I paid homage to the victor: "Ave Fate morituri te salutant."



## ABUSED NO MORE

Tommy sits in a corner  
As tears flow from his eyes  
The pain and hurt he is feeling  
Could never be disguised

He wonders to himself  
Could he really be that bad  
And why over such simple things  
Does his mother get so mad

Yet he knows she must love him  
For at times she is so tender and kind  
But in a moment she can change  
And lash out with a fury that's blind

Tonight was one of those nights  
He doesn't remember what he did or said  
And although at four he's just begun to live  
At times like this he wishes he were dead

He reaches up with bruised fingers  
To touch a swollen eye  
While nearby his mother cries  
For she too wonders why

Thinking back she remembers  
She can hear her father yell  
Did it begin with him  
This living chain of hell

No matter, for now the chain is broken  
Little Tommy will cry no more  
For God has called him home  
As painlessly bruised fingers hit the floor

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Samuel P. DeLoach





HAPPY  
BIRTHDAY  
MOM!  
LOVE TOMMY



## ALABAMA -- THE HEART OF DIXIE?

By: Katie Hill

Do you think of the title "Miss 'Possum Queen" as pure fiction, in the tradition of "The Beverly Hillbillies" Elly Mae Clampett? So did I, until my first trip to southeast Alabama.

It all started when Traci Cunningham, a friend from junior college, asked me to help her move from Macon back home to Headland, Alabama. She wanted me to meet her family, good farm people who she was sure would greet me like a long-lost cousin, and to attend the International Peanut Festival, held annually in Dothan and rivalled only by the Mardi Gras in New Orleans. I thought it all sounded like great fun and couldn't wait to go, especially after Traci informed me that she herself had once been second runner-up to Miss Headland in the Peanut Festival Beauty Pageant, and knew personally all the big-name, local beauty queens.

We drove into Headland on a perfect, crisp autumn afternoon, but unfortunately, I missed my first sight of the town because I sneezed. No matter, we didn't have time to sightsee, anyway. We had to get straight over to the family's farm so Traci's grandparents could extend to me their own, special brand of genteel Southern hospitality.

After driving for miles down a rural highway surrounded by acres of peanut and soybean fields, we pulled into a potholed, dirt driveway and parked next to a ramshackle, outhouse-type structure which turned out to be the Cunninghams' barn. We stepped through the weeds in the front yard, dodging a garden of goat droppings and rusted farming implements, picked our way around the fresh tobacco juice splatters on the shaky, wooden front steps, and knocked on the torn screen door that hung from one hinge.

When Grandma Cunningham opened the door to welcome us, I thought immediately of a TV star — Vicki Lawrence's "Mama" character on "The Carol Burnett Show." She hugged us both in her hamhock arms, pressing us into her immense polyester bosom, and apologized for Grandpa Cunningham's inability to greet us just then. She said he was sleeping, but as we followed her lumbering figure through the living room into the kitchen, and I caught a glimpse (and a whiff) of the shriveled, toothless, and very still body sprawled on the plastic covered couch, I had to resist an urge to hold my compact in front of Grandpa Cunningham's mouth and see if the mirror would fog.

In the kitchen, Grandma Cunningham handed us both jelly jars of iced tea and invited us to seat ourselves at the vinyl and linoleum dinette set. She proudly showed me the letter she and Grandpa Cunningham had received on their fiftieth wedding anniversary. It was a form letter from President and Mrs. Reagan and had been framed and hung on the wall

under a small American flag. Things were going nicely, especially after Traci told her grandmother that I was an ardent Reagan supporter, but then, during a lull in the conversation, the old lady's sharp glance fastened upon the tiny crucifix around my neck.

"Whut's thet?" she asked Traci suspiciously, narrowing her eyes and poking her chubby, gnarled forefinger in my general direction.

"It's a cross, Grandma," Traci answered nervously.

"Oh no, it ain't!" Grandma Cunningham replied. "She a Cathlik?" Silence.

Traci looked helplessly at me, and I cleared my throat and spoke up.

"Yes, ma'am."

After glaring accusingly at me as if she had just caught me stealing her chickens, this paragon of Southern Christianity heaved herself up from her chair, emptied her glass into the sink, and declared, "Well, I reckon thar's a place fer you people somewhar in this world. Traci, you be careful drivin' back to town and call us if you need anythin'. Y'all can show yerselves out, cain't you?"

Our hostess continued to face the wall behind the sink, leaving us to depart hastily via the kitchen door and make our way through the squawking chickens that flapped around Traci's car.

During the awkward return trip to Headland, Traci acted as if nothing had happened, and I joined in the masquerade, trying to appear animated as she described the fun we would have the next day at the Peanut Parade in Dothan.

At Traci's garage apartment, rented from the local Baptist minister, I helped her unload and said a silent prayer of thanks that her landlord wasn't home. I did not think I could stand any more Inquisition-style Southern hospitality.

Standing on the main street in Dothan the following morning, I chided myself for having made a snap judgement about Traci's family and friends based on one bad experience. The people who had lined up with us to see the parade were nothing if not friendly and charming. The mothers of Traci's school chums, most of whom were busy getting ready to ride on the floats, clustered around us, welcoming the "sweet little Cunningham girl and her little friend."

The ladies shared the latest news about their darling daughters — which beauty contests they had won, whose sons they were "practically engaged to," and what dresses they had chosen from the Sears catalog for the auspicious occasion of being hauled through the center of town on flower-laden floats behind the leading citizens' pick-up trucks. Traci responded graciously and enthusiastically to all this information, but I could see by the wistful look in her eyes that she would have given anything to have competed tooth and nail against her oldest friends for the title of "Miss Peanut Queen," and for the hard-won attention of the girls' beaux, as well.

A hush fell over the crowd, as the mayor of Dothan led off the parade in

his white Cadillac convertible. Next came the district legislators and prominent businessmen in cars of slightly lesser value. The senior citizens' church groups travelled in custom vans — Baptists first, of course, and the older members of the local black churches brought up the rear in a battered, old school bus. When I inquired of one of the ladies as to why this was so, she haughtily informed me that "the colored people like it this way."

After a brief pause in the festivities, a ripple of anticipation spread through the crowd. Traci's eyes shone as she turned to me and whispered, "Here it comes! Here it comes!"

Try to imagine my excitement when a huge cement mixer rounded the corner at the end of the street and roared through the middle of town, churning and spraying out a shower of peanuts! Children, their parents and grandparents, all dressed in their Sunday clothes, scurried into the street and pounced with greedy delight upon the peanuts, immediately gobbling what they could and shoving the rest into suit pockets and shiny patent-leather handbags. I managed to restrain myself and waited for everyone to calm down and return to the sidewalk so the parade could continue.

The rest of the afternoon passed in a blur of frilly pink taffeta dresses, sugary smiles, and bleached, shellacked hairdos. The townspeople had elected a separate court of royalty to represent each of the region's cash crops, and I watched in utter astonishment as "Miss Peanut Queen," "Young Miss Peanut Queen," "Junior Miss Peanut Queen," "Little Miss Peanut Queen," and "Tiny Little Miss Peanut Queen" waved to me from the peanut-shaped dais of their float. Seated at the feet of "Miss Peanut Queen," the sole black girl on the platform wore a banner proclaiming her "Miss Mahogany Peanut Queen." I didn't bother to ask why the young lady had competed for a separate title; I felt sure she liked it that way. The soybean, cotton, tobacco, and tomato floats followed, and after them, I lost track. But yes, there was a "Miss 'Possum Queen." He turned out to be a local fertilizer salesman.

Traci and I stayed until the very end of the parade, and as I watched her run across the pavement, gathering in her skirt leftover peanuts that hadn't been squashed by the trucks and floats, I vowed I would never, ever make fun of Macon's Cherry Blossom Festival again.





## GRADUATION

Three guys went cruisin' around  
On a hot May Friday night.  
Only a few days 'til graduation,  
Their futures were looking bright.

They were driving back from a party,  
Held for the graduating class,  
To have one last good time together,  
To look back on the years gone past.

For his graduation present,  
One boy had gotten a new car.  
They decided to see how fast it would  
go,  
Well, they didn't get too far.

They got up to one hundred twenty,  
They were really going fast.  
How could they know this one quick  
spin  
Was going to be their last?

Rounding a curve they lost control  
Hit another car and spun around.  
One boy flew through the windshield,  
And was dead when he hit the  
ground.

The other boys were saved  
By some strangers no one knew,  
Who pulled them from the flaming car  
Seconds before it blew.

Minutes after the accident,  
Hundreds of kids arrived,  
Shocked at what had happened,  
Wondering who had survived.

One boy is in a coma now,  
Another boy is dead,

The other barely made it out alive,  
Just because no one looked  
ahead.

The news has spread fast among  
friends,  
And graduation is almost here.  
They're just beginning to realize,  
Those boys won't graduate this  
year.

Christy Cadle

## NO EXCUSES

By: Kathy Albertson

A person needs a certain amount of skill to angle his way through Gamble Hall at twenty minutes after the hour. No orderly method of walking down the corridor is possible, and those leaving class appear to have the advantage. What exists can only be called chaos.

As I try fighting my way to Room 107, I feel like a swimmer going against the current. Every student leaving class has aligned shoulder-to-shoulder, creating a solid, out-going flow which allows no path for forward motions. After "Excuse me" fails to create an opening, I become the aggressor. I lead with my right shoulder and manage to gain a few steps but, directly in front of me, an immovable twosome leans against the wall. As they discuss their next rendezvous, I quickly shift my weight to my left shoulder and dodge around them without losing momentum.

Another quick shift back to the right and I find myself with a little space to move in. I've made it as far as the Writing Center. At this point, movement becomes quite difficult because the side entrance across the way has more people coming inside. Now the intersecting and merging comes from three directions.

Students coming in through the side entrance can turn right and merge with the people leaving Gamble Hall, or they can somehow cross through the out-going flow and join the few heading against the stronger current. (I've never seen the majority of students going to class; they're always leaving.)

This junction infuriates me. The incoming people have always been the ones forced out of their way, but I've found a way to alter this phenomenon. I have given up my polite aggressiveness and just push through without moving around anybody. I don't look at anyone; I just direct my gaze on 107's door and walk straight ahead. Something in the concentrated stare emits a signal that I'm in control. At times I feel guilty for my rude behavior, but most of the time the need for getting to class overcomes the need for etiquette.



## SPRING

Welcome chirping bird.  
Ceres' daughter has returned.  
Are you rejoicing?

## SUMMER

Daughter of Harvest:  
Entwine your hair with blossoms,  
Dance beneath the Sun.

## AUTUMN

Winds begin to blow,  
The burnished leaves have fallen.  
Proserpine has gone.

## WINTER

Back on her cold throne,  
The queen of the underworld  
Leaves the earth to grieve.

Anonymous

## IT

By: Stacy Hooks

So this is the place.

I volunteered to deliver the Christmas cookies and presents from the church. Now, I wish I hadn't.

Some call this a mental hospital, some call it a funny farm. The building itself looks to have a mentality of its own, but it's not funny. It looks alive. It's just ... an IT.

I'd better get this over with.

A single eye centered in the steel door sees me approaching, and as I reach the steps a static voice demands my name. I cooperate, and after a pause IT inhales and the door swings open— am I being sucked in?

Stepping inside, I smell the mildew growing on IT's bricks.

The air inside looks green, just a reflection from the green walls, I think. But I can smell the green, too.

An old lady wearing a dingy lab coat sits at a metal reception desk. Snarling at the packages she must search, she ushers me through another Cyclops door, and as I hear the steel slam, I sympathize with Jonah for his stay in the whale's belly.

IT's belly is large and rectangular, about the size of a standard basketball court. The air and the walls in here are green, too; I still smell the green. The ceiling is dirty. The floor is bone gray, with a film of dust lying on top. I think the dust is really that powdery stuff that institutional wax leaves when the floor isn't buffed. The narrow windows are like gills, allowing only a touch of light. Three of the five ceiling lights don't have bulbs.

There isn't much furniture, just a few tired chairs and card tables. Some shallow boxes on the card tables provide the only color in IT. Waiting for a white coat to come and tell me what I'm supposed to do, I walk over to the tables and shuffle through what I now see are jigsaw puzzle boxes. They're all empty.

The attendant's station is also empty. I see just one patient, a young man who squats in a corner, hugs his knees, and stares at nothing. The dusty stuff is all over his pants.

A housekeeper rearranging IT's dust sweeps around the solitary patient.

A commode gargles, then an attendant emerges from behind a door. As he beats on the counter of the attendant's station with a spoon, patients trickle from little pores in the walls that I hadn't noticed before. Must be their bedrooms. I wonder, which one is the padded cell?

The attendant tells me that as soon as my packages are searched, I can leave; he suggests that I mingle with the patients in the meantime. But I'm scared to mingle — what if some new attendant comes on duty and doesn't believe I'm a visitor and makes me stay?

The patients don't care that I'm not mingling. They're waiting in line for their turn at the electric cigarette lighter protruding from IT's wall, as if in some sinister group-mating ritual with their captor.

They are quiet, dull. Maybe there's something in this heavy green air that silences them; no, must be the drugs they're fed. But I don't want to talk either; I can't. This kindred muteness — is it contagious?

Still silent, I merely nod when the attendant tells me that the packages are fine and that I can leave if I'm ready. I don't know how long I've been here. Suddenly afraid he'll think I'm crazy and make me stay if I don't say anything, I thank him, but for what I don't know.

As IT exhales and the doors swing open, the captives watch my escape with envy and resentment; IT has opened not for them, but for me.

Outside, I hurry away, afraid that if I stop even for one quick breath of real, living air, IT will have second thoughts and suck me back in.

I feel safer in my car, and pulling onto the highway, I roll the windows down and breathe deeply to purge my lungs of the green air.

Breathing easier now, I feel no more fear of IT or concern for the captives I left behind, just selfish relief at the sight of IT shrinking in my rearview mirror.

## DISSERTATION

Curtains drawn,  
Study (with dark corners  
and cobwebs)  
Stands in anticipation

Θεωρία

For the Annunciation  
(delivered to the steady  
beat of man time)  
and Birth will occur  
Simultaneously

Φύσις

At this desk  
(with thin fierce blade of  
edison light  
the only illumination)  
And on that sheet of  
now plain typewriter  
paper.

Νόμος

Annunciation: hypothesis.  
Birth: theory. (or is it vice-  
versa? both in any case prelude to system)  
Bara: creatio ex nihilo.<sup>1</sup> From  
nothing but the calculation of  
Thoughtfulness.



## Praxis

Theoria no more: no observers  
to the mysteries.  
No mysteries now: flashlights slice  
beyond uncertain glow of torches,  
Showing all that is matters. (Subject:  
matter.) Dust, dirt, mud, tested  
and predicted, we turn to other  
material.

## Geschichte

Light bends, twists, returns to  
Its source.  
We dissect flashlight-holding fingers:  
Blinded by our  
Uninspired probe,  
We lay out the straw  
to  
dry.

## Kultur

Steve Ealy

.....  
'On the difficulties of this reading of the Hebrew, see Robert Sacks, "The  
Lion and the Ass: A Commentary on The Book of Genesis," Interpretation VIII / 2,3  
(May 1980), pp. 32-34, A.E. Speiser, Genesis (New York, 1964), pp. 12-13, and  
Henry J. Flanders, Robert W. Crapps, and David A. Smith, People of the Covenant:  
An Introduction to the Old Testament (New York, 1963), pp. 51-55.

## FRANK SHAFER, PRIVATE I

by: Brett A. Thomas

I was being shot at. I'd been a private investigator for three years now, and this was my first shootout. I'm surprised it took as long to occur as it did. That's the story of my life. You see, someone is always throwing something at me. My wife throws pots. My mother threw insults. My school-mates threw rocks. And Joe over there was throwing bullets. I must be some kind of magnet for missiles. If we ever get in a nuclear war I'm sure I'll be at ground zero.

Anyway, back to my story. I said this was my first shootout as a P.I., but I was really kind of stretching things. You see, this one was sort of my fault. I was having a few drinks with Joe over there, and we were joking around. I must have said something to get him mad, because suddenly he was swinging at me. Being the nice guy that I am, I backed off, since I knew he was drunk. Next thing I know, he pulls out a .45 and starts shooting at me! Naturally, I dove for cover and drew my gun. Problem is, Joe and I are drinking buddies, and I didn't really want to kill him, or even hurt him. Thankfully, he was so blasted that the safest place to be was in his sights.

As I peeked around the crate he was hiding behind, I saw Joe take aim carefully this time. His hand shook at the last moment, and the bullet impacted in the side of a wall fifteen feet from my head. Suddenly, Joe came up with a new idea, and got up. Moving unsteadily in my direction, he pointed his pistol towards my hiding place. Of course, no one, not even Joe at his drunkest, could miss me from the range he was about to reach, so I reluctantly pointed my revolver in his general direction. Taking careful aim, I put a round in the ground at his feet, and Joe, who still had a little sense, quickly scampered for cover.

I breathed a little easier when I heard sirens in the distance, and sighed in relief when a police car pulled up. Two officers leaped out, guns drawn, and pointed them at us.

"Throw down your weapons and come out with your hands up, scumbags!" cried one of the cops. I didn't much care for the "scumbag" bit, but then I didn't much care to be blown away, either. I tossed my pistol out into the alley and, hands raised, slowly stood up. Joe, the drunken idiot, yelled with joy, and emptied a clip in my direction. His shots went so wide, though, that the police thought *they* were being shot at, and emptied their guns in Joe's direction. To be honest, they weren't much better shots than Joe, and so all twelve rounds missed. Thankfully, Joe got the point and emerged from behind his crate. Naturally, both of us were arrested for disturbing the peace, public drunkenness, discharging a firearm within city limits, attempted murder, vandalism, and trespassing. It was going to be a long evening.

The next morning, my wife came and picked me up after a night in jail. I had been exonerated on all charges, but Joe was going to have a hard time of it. From the look on my wife's face, I was fairly sure that I was too, and

the lecture began as I got in the car.

"What were you doing in that *awful* part of town, anyway, Frank?" she demanded.

"Well, dear, I was doing some —" I began.

"And with such *horrible* company! That Joe Astwitch is such a *terrible* man!"

Actually, Joe isn't that bad a guy ; he just can't hold his booze. I was going to point this out, but I never got a chance.

"*Shooting !* " she screeched. "You're lucky you weren't killed!"

"I was —"

"You have disgraced our name for generations to come!" she wailed.

There was obviously no stopping her, and I was completely unsuccessful in doing so for several hours, until she finally shut up because her voice gave out.

I was thankful for the silence, but it didn't last long. I was sitting there, quietly watching the football game, when the phone rang.

"Hello?" I asked, a shining example of originality.

"Yeah," said a voice on the other end, "Is Dimitia there?"

"Uh..." I fumbled. "What number were you trying to reach?"

"354-5418," came the reply.

"Sorry," I said, "this is 5419."

"Oh," the man said. "Sorry."

"No problem." I hung up the phone.

The receiver hadn't been in the cradle more than a minute when it rang again.

"No," I said, picking up the phone, "Dimitia isn't here."

"Excuse me?" questioned the caller. "Is this Frank Shafer's Detective Agency?"

Ooops. "Uh, yes. May I help you?"

"I would be interested in hiring your services. When may we get together?" Good thing I thought to have the calls from my office forwarded here!

"Well," I said, thinking quickly, "I should be free this afternoon."

"Alright," the beautiful female voice on the other end said, "I'll be there at three." She hung up.

Oh, boy, that one sounded like a fox! Calling out to my wife that I was going to work, I ran out to my '73 Nova and hopped in. Driving quickly, I reached my office at 2:55 and ran to my door. Naturally, it said "Frank Shafer, Private Investigator." I'm too much of a romantic for it to say anything else. Now all I needed was a .45 to replace my Dad's police revolver and a divorce to make me single again, and I'd be something out of a Bogart movie.

I ran behind my desk, got in my chair, leaned back, and put my feet on the table. If only I could say "sweetheart" the right way, I'd be set.

A quick knock came at the door, startling me out of my reverie. My first

client in two years and I was dozing off!

"Come in!" I cried in my best Bogart voice.

The door opened and a woman walked in. Whew! *Ugly!* She had brown hair hacked off at shoulder length on one side and higher on the other. She must have weighed all of about seventy pounds and had a scrawny face. Horn-rimmed glasses, paisley jeans, and a tasteless hand-bag rounded out the picture.

"Mr. Shafer," the woman said, "I'm Monda Harbonowitz. I talked to you on the phone."

What a letdown. She had the voice of a dream and the persona of a nightmare.

"Hello." I managed. "What can I help you with?" I sounded like the salesman at Sears.

"I have a little problem, Mr. Shafer."

Through an effort of will I managed not to point out that this was rather obvious.

"You see," she began, "my husband is missing."

Probably ran off. Actually despite my initial physical impression, she seemed to be a fairly nice person.

"That really isn't up my aisle, Mrs. Harbonowitz. Have you tried the police?"

"Yes," she replied, "they made a file and haven't contacted me since."

"How long ago was this?" I asked.

"About twenty years."

"I see."

Things went rapidly downhill from there, and I agreed to take the case. As soon as she left, I took down my trusty copy of Gerribaldi's Handbook of Detecting, 37th Edition and looked under "Missing Persons."

"Missing persons," the text read, "is a job best left to the local police." Gee, thanks, Gerribaldi. I threw the manual down in disgust and sat down to think.

Well, according to Mrs. Harbonowitz, her husband had worked at a local meat packing plant, which was the last place he was ever seen. That, naturally, would be the logical place to start. So, I hopped in my car and drove on over to Foster's Meats, in search of Mr. Angus Harbonowitz.

Upon arriving, the first person I spoke to was a security guard, who took me to see Aaron Antin, the oldest worker at the plant. "If anyone'll remember Mr. Harbonowitz, it'll be Aaron!" he bragged.

"Hello, Mr. Antin," I began.

"Who are you?" demanded the old man.

"I'm Frank Shafer," I said. "A private investigator. I'm here to ask you about an Angus Harbonowitz."

Suddenly, a cruel smile spread over Mr. Antin's face. I was about to ask him what he was smiling about when a freight train hit me in the back of the head.

Actually, it wasn't quite that bad, just close. I woke up several hours later in a freezer, with several human bodies. A quick check showed that they were all dead, and I turned my mind towards getting out of there.



In front of me was obviously the door, but, naturally, there was no handle on this side. I quickly went through my pockets, and discovered to my complete astonishment that I still had my gun. Taking careful aim at where the latch should be, I pulled the trigger. There was a loud report from my pistol, and the door flew open.

Wanting to leave as soon as possible, I ran out of the freezer, into a vacant hall. Using my directional instincts, I headed to the right. My directional instincts were acting at normal efficiency tonight; I soon discovered that this end of the corridor was a dead end. Except that there, just barely in reach, was the sill of a window. After checking carefully to make sure there wasn't anyone on the other side of it, I climbed up to the window.

Looking through it, I saw what appeared to be an office. Putting my correspondence school training to work, I spent the next fifteen minutes attempting to pick the lock of the window, and ended up breaking the pane in frustration.

Once inside, I saw rows of filing cabinets. Out of curiosity, I went up to the one marked "H" and tried to open it. Surprisingly enough, it was unlocked. Inside I found a file on Mr. Harbonowitz. In the file was his hiring date and employment history. The last entry, dated twenty years ago, read "Put into beef stew."

Looked like I'd found something *big*. Going over to a nearby desk, I picked up a phone and called the police. Upon their arrival, I was arrested for breaking and entering, discharging a firearm in public, and, as I had been mistaken for an employee, the murders of the 250,000 people in the files. Thankfully, it was straightened out in the end. The owners and managers got a total of over fifty thousand years in prison, and Mrs. Harbonowitz paid me a large fee.

Later that summer, the mayor decided to give me an award for my safeguarding of the common good. Most of the town turned out, and the mayor and I stood on a large platform. As the mayor walked toward me, medal in hand, he tripped. The medal flew out of his hands, and, executing a ninety-degree in-flight turn, made a beeline for my head. Oh, well, I guess that's just the story of my life...

The Tuba

Voice of the Viking

DAVID BROWN



## FRIENDS AGAIN

In the morning I wake  
up  
And turn on the light.  
The troubles we've  
had linger in my mind.  
The recent past has  
brought to light  
The real feelings in  
the  
Hemispheres of your  
mind.  
We're just  
Friends again.

Sometimes I stay up  
late at night  
Wandering through  
the vast spaces  
Of the world.  
I think of all the times  
We've been together.  
Good and bad.  
But after all is said  
and done,  
We're just  
Friends again.

During the daytime I  
wonder  
About the future and  
all  
It has in store for me-  
And you.  
The world is always  
changing  
But one fact will  
always remain the  
same.  
We're just  
Friends again.



## NO ESCAPE

By: C. Elizabeth Rodgers

"No Escape" is a short story written in the form of James Joyce's book, The Dubliners. Throughout this book, Joyce's stories contain images and symbolism of unending patterns which the characters cannot stop. The theme of The Dubliners is the inability to escape.

Kevin loudly placed the discoloured mugs of Guinness on the rotting brown wooden table, where three ornery men were playing cards. Because of the force the girl used to put down the mugs, the foam overflowed onto their game.

— You half-wit girl, said one of the men, you damn near ruined our game!

But Kevin was beyond caring. In frustration, she decided to go into the kitchen to get away from that stale, smoke-filled room, but the owner followed and pulled her by her hair back into the tavern room.

For five of her eighteen years, she worked in this miserable tavern. Because of his illness, her father was unable to work nine months of the year. Clayton Stickle felt his daughter was robust and capable of paying for her keep. He remembered that at age eleven he had to work in the fields twelve hours a day so that there would be enough food on the table for his eight brothers and sisters. Clayton's father had the croup and was unable to work, so his mother earned their keep by selling cockles and mussels.

Kevin walked along the foggy ominous waterfront of the River Liffey. The violet sky was filled with a bright full moon and thousands of stars. One night, she jumped over the railing along the river, but her smock caught on a nail, and she instead was suspended along the balustrade and ripped her gray threadbare dress.

At first, Kevin tried to work cheerfully in the dark dismal tavern. To help her survive there, she began to fantasize a world in which she would want to exist. In the tavern, she heard stories about the beautiful dancers and singers and their feathery red and gold shimmering costumes. The men always talked of the famous Colleen O'Kelley, the rage of Europe. Kevin imagined touring with Colleen O'Kelley and performing for the handsome Prince Martin of Wales. She longed to hear the cheers from the multitudes of fans who would follow her.



Kevin's work in the tavern was not difficult, but she had to tolerate the men groping for her. The owner, Griffin Fitzgerald, threatened to fire her if she upset the customers. When she arrived at the tavern at five in the afternoon, Kevin was able to eat some lamb stew leftover from lunch, then had to work continuously until midnight.

In the first month of working at the tavern, Kevin had a customer who had travelled to the Far East. This customer, Miles Clements, had golden blonde hair, a near-white moustache, and a rosy glow about his face. Miles told her stories of the customs and lifestyles of these beautiful exotic places. Kevin learned of the majestic green mountains, the jewelled palaces and the golden statues. For a week, Miles Clements patronized the tavern to talk with Kevin. She was fascinated by his stories, and at night could not sleep for she was busy dreaming of living in a ruby-inlaid palace and travelling to many countries.

The time came for Miles to leave Dublin. Kevin begged him to take her, for she longed to flee Dublin, the tavern, and her father. Without Miles Clements' consent, she packed her few possessions for the journey and hid them in the tavern's back room. At midnight, she approached Miles Clements. He offered her a chair and some stout and soda bread. Kevin excitedly told him of how she had always thought of leaving this gloomy tavern. Miles sat in a dimly lit corner and listened quietly.

— Miles, I got my things gathered to go away wi'ya, said Kevin.

Miles half smiled at Kevin, flashing his white teeth, saying

— Poor miss, you can't come with me. I've a bride in Crosshaven and I shan't leave her. She's a weak spirit and shn't exist without me.

— You bloody...buzzard! Get out of my sight!

After this experience, Kevin no longer trusted any man. Sometimes she did accept their propositions, but only when she was in need of money. Each night, the poor girl would detach herself from reality, and sing to herself while working. Because Kevin's mother died in childbirth, her father had to raise her. This was their first child, so Kevin had no brothers or sisters. Clayton Stickle wanted a son to name after his father, and named his daughter Kevin.

When Kevin was old enough, she regularly went to mass and confession each week religiously. Her attendance at mass dwindled, until she rarely went. Kevin began to lose all faith in God because, though she knew it was wrong, she prayed for her father's demise. She had always blamed her father for her miserable existence and often dreamed of the day she would leave Dublin when he died. After her incident with Miles Clements, something in her would not let her leave until then.

As a child, Kevin put in many hours keeping their ramshackle cottage so clean that it, in its own decrepit way, shined. During the late winter and spring, her father was always in the fields, farming potatoes. Along with two other men, Clayton worked on the many acres of Donald

Cronin, a wealthy landowner from Limerick who also taught at Trinity College. Year after year, the men allowed the potatoes to remain in a warm dark area to sprout eyes. When there were plenty of eyes, they quartered and planted the potatoes. Clayton and the men carefully tended the dark green stalks with the little white flowers in the dark-coloured earth. For the three months that it took to nurture these white treasures, Clayton was quite meticulous about matters at home and in the fields. After the harvest, he consistently was nurtured by a flask of Jameson.

Over the years, Clayton increasingly was more often drunk than sober. When he drank too much, Clayton would have a short bout of violence, then would retreat into his dark room and sleep off his drunkenness. Many times when Kevin came in late at night, in the darkness she could see the broken brown whiskey jugs from the light that streamed in from the sides of the window shade. She quickly cleared away the shattered glass for fear that in the morning her father would blame her for the house's disarray. One night, Kevin had gotten in from work shortly before dawn, and did nothing to straighten the house. When Clayton awoke the next day, he woke Kevin up with fury in his wide black eyes. He threw her off her pallet and shook her until she could no longer stand. Kevin often remembered this and never would forgive her father for it.

Clayton Stickle's liver ailment worsened and he became incapable of leaving the house. His day consisted of drinking, eating, and intermittently sleeping off his drunkenness. The worse Clayton got, the more hope Kevin had. She felt this was her only escape. Out of her unperceivable loyalty, she remained with her withering father and in her unbearable confinement with him. There were several instances when she thought he certainly would die. Kevin could never do anything to induce his death, for she felt it had to be God's will to let her have her freedom. She knew that if she did something to cause his death, God would make her pay more penance. Clayton always said to her — If it weren't for you, your ma would still be living today to take care o'me.

Whenever Kevin wanted to run away, she would remind herself of her father's words.

In late September, when Kevin left Mulligan's to walk home, gray circling clouds hung low over the River Liffey. She was afraid to cross the O'Connell Bridge for fear of being struck by a bolt of lightning. After building up her courage, she made up her mind to traverse the bridge to reach the east side. As she tried to make her way across, the winds kept pushing her back towards the West. Kevin had to struggle violently to cross, though she was tossed about by the violent wind force. When she finally crossed the bridge, a great crash of thunder sounded behind her. Kevin knew the open waterfront was not safe, so she frantically ran home after falling several times in dark alleys between the houses. The

large raindrops violently spattered down on her raincoat and she shook from a chill going through to her bones.

Lightning flashed ahead of her. It appeared to strike Nelson's Pillar, but the lightning had no effect upon it. Kevin was petrified of lightning. When at last she reached her dimly-lit house, Kevin felt a premonitory chill as she walked into it.

Gingerly, Kevin walked into her father's small cubicle of a room. Her father was lying in bed, wearing his dark church suit with a dilapidated Bible opened to the Book of Psalms resting in his right hand. His placid face was illuminated by the light seeping in from the window. He looked younger than Kevin had ever seen him look. She felt helpless and fell to her knees crying.

She always thought she could leave Dublin and start a new life away from her past. When her father died after many years of her drudgery, she thought this was her chance of escape. But a few days after his death, she realized that she was in the family way by one of the paying customers.

## THE WESTERN FRONT

Soldiers in World War I reported how  
horses torn by gunfire would live for  
hours and days, stumbling about in  
their own intestines.

### Day

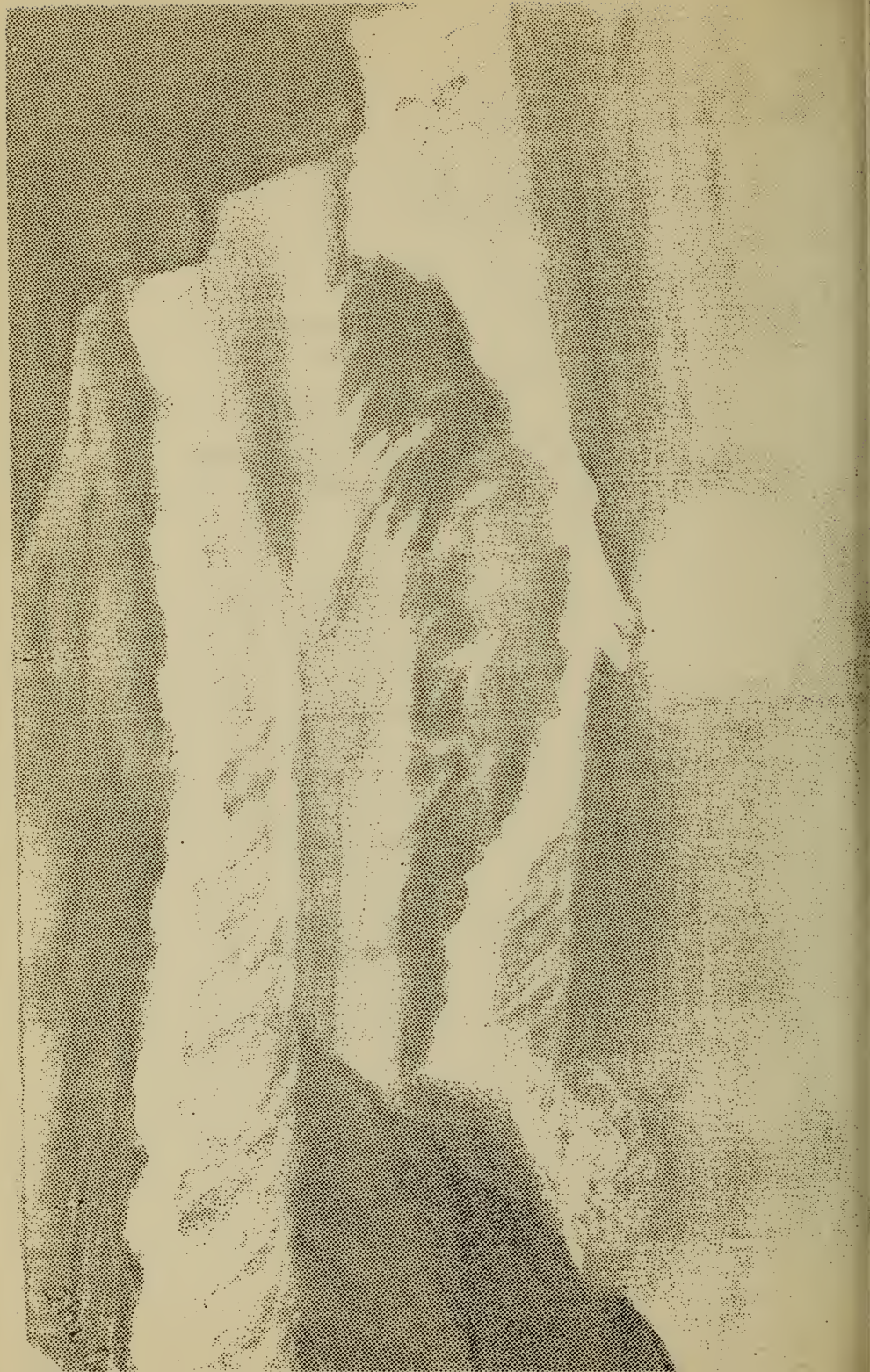
Screaming horses shake the air  
All a sun's day  
Shrill tremolos      the frantic  
Falling  
Toward the quarter moon  
Rising      their dark eyes are so  
Round      grains of their dying dust spread  
Upon the hills      in sodden  
Prance rapt      entangled by the gloss  
Of glue-slick insides      glistening silver  
Day's light roped in slow spilling  
Flesh they fall      round and round circling  
Staring down      haunched upon thick mucous  
Cushions      of      their emptying  
The last scream      implacable  
In final moon dark  
Rising



## Night

Starshafts tunnel    each thick shriek  
Continuum of grisly grace    each  
Last fire of noisome flesh  
Coiling  
Thru ribs of night    guttural ooze  
Ascending unseen    spills  
Upon the hills    the hideously serene  
slide  
And rush of silence  
   Darkly    the horses  
Fall    pinned sure by starlight    softly  
Steaming    spongey flesh    beneath them  
Mounds    the glut and suck  
Into the last light  
Falling

Robert Strozier



## SINGLE FILE

By: Stacy Hooks

Mmmm. I'm thirsty. Andy and Fergie were getting married. Must've dozed off. Damn, I wanted to see her dress.

So cold. Mama always turns the air on full blast. Wait, I did see her dress. Made Di's look like a prom gown. The wedding was yesterday. Hurts so bad...that's right, I had surgery this morning. Must be over. Feels different from the other times. Always happened so fast before. Feels like I've been asleep forever this time. I can't move. Wanna open my eyes. Somebody get this mask off my face. I told the O.R. nurse please don't put a mask on my face, I'm claustrophobic or something. I told her. God, I can't talk. I can't see. Can't breathe. I don't think I'm breathing. Must be in the morgue. I hear people mumbling. I must be dead. God, I can't be dead, it'll kill Mama if I'm dead. They're mumbling louder now..."notified the family...milligrams of morphine...of valium...tachycardia...units blood...oh shit! she's wakin' up-- you said she'd stay under 'til Thursday...I told her mother, you tell the patient...when's the blood comin'? Can't wait 'til tomorrow, let me call 'em".

"Stacy, wake up, c'mon, wake up. How are you feeling?"

It's the doctor, the one who never wears socks. Guess they don't come in scrub green. He's opening my eyes with his thumbs. Hope he can't tell I'm laughing at him. Can't help it — he looks like Dr. Seuss. He hates it when I call him that.

I'm glad nobody can hear me thinking.

"Stacy, you're awake now; squeeze my hand. We had a little bit of bleeding, so we're going to ICU for a little while."

We? What'd he do, pick up the wrong end of a scalpel? This is interesting. It's hysterical.

So this is ICU. They're all scurrying around like a bunch of green mice. Even the nurse. But I like her. She's huge. Related to the Jolly Green Giant by any chance? She's nice, though. She belongs here, sort of an omniscient green mass. I think she's on my side. She's so quiet, like she isn't supposed to talk. Guess most of her patients don't have much to say. Where's my gown?

Well, hello big sister. Mama made you come.

I look terrible? I'm so pale? What have they done to my face? How is it, Donna, that you always know exactly what not to say but you say it anyway? Who is that? I don't believe it. I can't believe you brought your fellow managers from Burger King to see me. I don't even know them. They think I'm some kind of spectacle. They smell like french fries. Greasy. I'm going to throw up. They don't belong here.



It hurts again. I need to sit up. What's this on my neck? Where are these tubes coming from— me? I can't breathe. Nurse, I'm so glad you're here. Hope you make them leave.

Better, thank you. How'd you know, is my brain on a monitor, too? Thanks for getting rid of Burger Queen and her charbroiled court. She never could act like a sister, but it's funny when she tries. Am I really that pale?

.....  
So you're here, Mama. Donna sneaked in when you went to the bathroom. She said you told the doctor you weren't leaving the hospital without me. That's funny. Did you really think they saved my life just to get rid of you? Probably. I wish you'd stop faking. I know it's killing you. And get rid of the cake-icing smile. If you want me to rest, why don't you stop talking? I feel sorry for you, out there with the charbroiled court— did they bring you a Whopper? You'll have to leave soon; it'll be somebody else's turn. You think I look good? Somebody's lying.

Hello again, nurse. I knew you'd make her leave. I'm glad. She wasn't funny and that scared me. Make her get some rest, will you?

.....  
So the preacher's here.

Do you always wear a suit? You probably sleep in one. Wonder what you would look like in jeans and a three-day beard? Did you think you had to come for God? He's already here, but thanks for coming anyway. I wonder, what do you see?

What are you doing back so soon, nurse? Thought you just left. Coming to see me or the preacher? Strange combination, you two. There you are, looking at each other and thinking that if you just had a little of the other's resources, you could pull me through. A nurse who could work miracles with her medicine. A pastor kneeling at my bed, praying for the medicine to work and the blood to get here soon.

Why are you taking the preacher outside the room to murmur and shake your head at him?

That was quick, nurse. Why won't you smile? Do you really like this job?

.....  
Well, well, it's Dr. Seuss. You still aren't wearing socks. Nurse can't run you out, can she?

Oh please. Don't call me sweetheart. I'm sick enough already. How do I feel? Do I need anything? You've been very worried about me?

Go ahead, ask me questions, but I'm not talking.

You don't want me to worry about anything? If there's nothing to worry about, then why am I in ICU?

You don't think I know what happened.

Don't listen to him nurse — we don't need a little something for



pain in here, and we don't need something to make us rest.

I guess he's got to talk to somebody; he's talking to me now. Says they almost lost me in there. He tells me to rest, and for me please not to die.

So you messed up, did you? Bet the chief of surgery really laid into you.

I'm pinching the IV tubing shut so the wonder drugs won't hit me just yet. It's fun, lying here and watching you grovel.

Oh, let go of my hand, you idiot; that's the one pinching the IV. You never even noticed it wasn't dripping.

You can keep the second dose for now, nurse. I won't be needi....

.....  
Dr. Corse. I'm glad to see you. Thought you'd never make it. Wish you could have been my surgeon instead of just my doctor. This never would have happened. Don't much blame you, though. Diabetes and hemorrhoids are more predictable. You're almost a friend. This'll be the first intelligent visitor I've had since I woke up.

You don't have to say anything. You're doing a bad job of looking cheerful — give your face a rest.

Oh, good. He's going to see what they've done to my belly. I'm kinda curious myself.

You're peeling the sheet away like a wet diaper.

Here comes the nurse. Not more morphine, I hope. She must've been born with a syringe in her chubby little fist.

Wait, nurse, I want him to tell me what it looks like.

Must look bad. He has that look on his face that all doctors have when they think they're hiding what they feel but they aren't — their eyes and mouth fuse to their faces like cheese on a pizza.

I can always tell when you're tired, Dr. Corse; your eyes get red and glassy. God, look at them. You must be exhausted. Funny, they didn't look like that when you came in. Look at me. Wait a minute on the shot, nurse, he hasn't told me anything yet. Wait. I thought you were on my side, nurse, why wouldn't you wait? Don't look so doctory, Dr. Corse. This is all a big fiasco, don't you know that? Don't leave yet, you haven't told what it looks....

.....  
So it's over. I'm in a private room now. Wish that big green nurse was here. The one that came in this morning got the IV tubing tangled in the IVAC cord. Yanked it out. Bled so much I thought I was in for another pint. Had to put the new one in my thumb, nowhere else left. They won't yell at her, though. Even a bad nurse is hard to find these days.

They're back. Donna came in and woke me up to tell me she was going to use my phone. Thank God it was in the middle of lunch rush — the charbroiled court couldn't come. Mama was here, making sure I knew what she'd been through and how much worse it was on her

health than it was on mine. Preacher came by, saying everyone'd be praying for me. Dr. Seuss came by, said I'd picked up a little infection — translated, that means staph — I heard him talking to the nurse in the hall. Dr. Corse came by to thank me for the tomatoes I brought him from my garden the day I was admitted.

Nobody said much. I guess dying people aren't interesting when they aren't dying anymore. They came the first time out of curiosity and, I think, also out of fear and relief — fear at the knowledge that what happened to me could well have happened to them, and relief that it didn't. Today, they came out of a sense of obligation. It's ridiculous. In they came, single file, not to comfort, but to look. They're still uneasy when they look at me now. And I'm still laughing at them.

## SUDDEN FROST

One night the weather changes.

The disarming warmth  
Of winter's late arrival vanishes,  
Chilling the blood at last.  
Dawn appears a dream-like sight  
Of frozen shapes,  
Like helpless creatures caught in  
ghostly amber,  
Shocked at their new state.

Thin, brittle fingers of ice  
Fringe the leaves;  
Each oak becomes a whitened  
frieze,  
Laced with rime embroidery.  
Tipped with countless icy tears,  
Silent, resigned,  
The mournful pines bow down.

The sunless air cuts quickly through  
my clothes,  
Like a careless touch  
Against a frigid pane.  
This sudden frost has a familiar feel,  
As when a warm-thought heart  
Turned cold.

I know that this strange arctic trance  
Will pass — in time, redeeming  
warmth  
All captive forms returns  
To some resemblance of the past.

Beyond each winter, Spring.

David Kelley

## BELL HILL REVISITED

By: Patricia R. King

The announcement in the newspaper was on a middle page and I almost missed it. If it hadn't been for the picture of the church beside it, I might have. But I did see it, and stopped to read:

The annual service at the Bell Hill Meeting House will be held on the last Sunday of July. The choir of the Harrison United Methodist Church will offer musical selections and the Rev. Samuel Birdseye from the Congregational Church in Bridgton will deliver the sermon. The public is cordially invited to attend this yearly event in this historical landmark church.

Bell Hill Meeting House, Otisfield, Maine. I was propelled immediately back to the time when I was a child and we had acquired the farmhouse across the road from that church. But what would the hilltop look like now? It had been many years since I had visited that spot — in fact, not since Mother had sold the house after Dad's death. I was almost afraid to think of how it might look. I had carried that whole area around in my mind, used it in the creative writing of articles and poetry, and recently had begun work on a historical novel based upon my memories of that place. Would Thomas Wolfe's book title of You Can't Go Home Again apply? I wanted to find out.

So, on that year's last Sunday in July, I drove from Portland through Raymond, Casco, Spurr's Corner, and up the steep road to the top of Bell Hill. The church still thrust its spire into the sky, and the house was there looking almost the same. The one-room red brick schoolhouse obviously had been restored as a companion to the church. I parked beside a blueberry patch, noting the cemetery huddling in its familiar place across the way. But there were intrusions: other houses had been built, and the forest had climbed up the meadows so that the Presidential Range in New Hampshire could no longer be seen from that vantage point. As I turned to join others filing into the church I felt almost schizophrenic. The adult in the here and now, I was at the same time the child, gazing familiarly at the organ and the Duncan Phyfe table near the altar. I don't remember much



about that service, but afterwards a tall, shy, red-haired man approached me and asked if I was whom he thought I was. Upon my affirmation he told me he was Mark. And there right behind him were Betty and Richard. No other kind of reunion could ever compare to what my childhood friends and I shared that day. But after the excitement died down, I stayed behind as the others straggled away. I needed time alone. I needed to be that child again, just for a little while.

It is 1932. After much searching Dad finds the summer home he's been looking for: a white clapboard house with an ell connecting it to a barn. Built in the late 1700's, it anchors itself to the rocky soil and spreads down to an adjoining field. Three oak trees stand sentinel on the front lawn guarding the house as if it were a palace. Indeed, it feels like one to this small person, for inside are rooms full of yesterdays including Ben Franklin stoves, ladderback chairs, spool beds, and a schoolmaster's stand-up desk. There are to be fourteen summers here, and during that first one I am Columbus as I explore its nooks and crannies. Old trunks groaning as they are pried open hold wispy lace dresses, stiff petticoats, and shawls. There are books to read by the light of kerosene lamps, and one closet is filled with old magazines. Here is a treasure trove waiting for me.

But the church beckons me. I feel like a trespasser as I turn the key in the huge white door, so I tiptoe. I listen for sounds that aren't there. How big the pews are, and they have doors on them that squeak when you open them. Sunlight is a trespasser, too, as it filters through the multi-panes of six huge windows. There is an organ, but I am too young to try it out. I go out and sit on the large slabs of granite hewn for the steps of the church. Dad comes but doesn't scold me for being there. Instead, he offers me a trip to the tower of the church. It is a trip made precariously because we must climb ladders. But even as young as I am I am aware that what I am seeing is unusual. Dad points out the White Mountains of New Hampshire on one side, a chain of lakes like a necklace of sparkling crystals worn by the earth in honor of summer on another, and finally he points to where three villages dot the landscape, precise in their boundaries.

I want to visit the cemetery, so together we part tall grass ripe for mowing and pry up the hook of its gate. There we find gravestones bearing names like Hepzibah and Hannah leaning toward those marked Benjamin and Amos. Squirrels scamper across the stone wall fences. The leaves of elm and oak trees whisper in the wind. I squeal when a field mouse darts across my shoes and I reach for Daddy's hand.

He walks me down to the schoolhouse and leaves me there. This is the final stop on this first exploration. It is Saturday and even though the school is still in use on weekdays, it now is locked and empty. But if I stand on a piece of wood I can peer inside the windows to find wooden desks lined up like soldiers standing at attention. Over against a far wall is a blackboard, and beyond it is a large iron stove. I will visit the school

when it is in session and I will use it in a poem written after it had fallen into the disrepair which would later be corrected.

### THE SCHOOL

The years have torn the one-room school apart; under a gaping hole which sucks the wind a chipmunk skips across the slanted slate that upright felt the squeaks and pulls of chalk which children made exploring truth. Now as the mist at daybreak steps inside where chairs lie rotting on the floor, the pages of a reader rip away and scatter through tall grass upon the hill, to spread forgotten sentences against the sun.

So, while we were living there on Bell Hill, the child turns into an adult who uses this reservoir of memories in ways unimagined at the time, unaware that all of this was a gift I would be unwrapping for the rest of my life. Here is a setting that can never be changed by physical alterations, for it is safely tucked away inside inner realms where one can always go home again. In this world characters leap to life. In this circumferential domain they go in and out of the house, attend that church, send their children to the school, and bury their dead. I think of words by Carson McCullers in one of her novels: "The sense of the past grew in him. Memories built themselves with almost architectural order." And Edith Wharton wrote about "the low, rich murmur of the past." In the past and present found at Bell Hill, child and adult mingle. They stir themselves into prose and poetry whenever they are summoned, eager to provide the stimulus for my creative future.

### THERE IT STANDS

There it stands,  
Its knarled fingers reaching into  
the vast black sky.  
Grasping and entrapping the stars  
and the moon.

Hideously disfigured  
Eerily whistling a song  
composed by nature.

There it stands,  
Alone and drooping  
Hunched over with melancholy,  
as though stricken with grief.  
Foreboding and haunting  
Carved and shaped and sculpted  
by the elements of time.

There it stands,  
The lone oak tree in the corner  
of the courtyard.

Shirley Annette Harrison

### GRANDFATHER

Ancient porch swing, lawn green, creaking on chains  
Brittle with Chicago rust, it bears his  
Grave weight, his eighty years, his mumbled song.  
Sinking into his ash-smeared lap, rooting  
Into his barreled chest, I smell cigars  
And clean sweat, then press my ear to Sweden  
Rumbling strangely beneath his gray sweater.

Rich Raymond



## A NURSE'S "WAR"

By: Kim Grier

My friend Joe, a Vietnam veteran, told me once about the method that he and the other seasoned recruits used to determine the warworthiness of the FNG's. Each incoming recruit was invited to accompany the soldiers on a mission which was anticipated to be only mildly dangerous — they might catch a little bit of fire and perhaps take a few hits, but they would not have their backs against the wall. Under these conditions, the new man's reaction was analyzed — if he wet his pants or climbed over the man next to him in an attempt to flee, he was relegated to the motor pool. However, if he possessed that certain quality which caused his brain to click onto automatic, thereby allowing him to shoot people, he had passed what they called the ultimate test. He was accepted into the ranks of those qualified to march on the killing fields.

I work in a war zone, too: the Emergency Room at Memorial Medical Center. I would like to say that I am a miniature Florence Nightingale, gliding gracefully, cool and poised, from one life and death battle to the next (winning them all, of course), with my presence making the difference between total recovery or permanent damage, but the truth is that I am just an aide, and besides, most of the events that take place in the Emergency Room are not true emergencies anyhow. We spend a lot of time fighting children who are bound and determined to kick our eyes out while the doctor is stitching up thier lacerations, or losing the battle to keep all the trauma rooms clean with sheets on every stretcher, or calming disoriented drunks. Our weapons are ourselves — our personalities, what we say to our patients, and how we treat them.

Most of the time, the limits of our excitement are the person with a cut mimicking a red Niagra Falls, or the attempted suicide, unconcious and issuing prodigious amounts of charcoal stools for us to clean (we use charcoal to neutralize whatever substance the person has ingested). The treatment for suicide is enough to deter me from ever trying it; the taste of the charcoal preparation is so revolting that I have seen patients who, rather than drink the charcoal, opt to have a tube that looks like a clear garden hose inserted through their noses followed by a suctioning that is enough to turn one's stomach inside out.

Every now and then, though, we are confronted with a true emergency, and then a priorly- prepared battle plan kicks into action. As soon as we receive the call that a protocol is on the way, doctors and nurses double-time from all corners of the Emergency Room to assemble in tight formation at the appointed trauma room. There we stand at tense attention, wondering how bad it will be. How hard will we have to fight to win this one? Will we win it? My job, for the most part, is to stand in the corner and stay out of the way, hoping and praying that, at a crucial moment, a doctor does not mistake me for a nurse and rely on me to perform a procedure which I

cannot do. Once the patient arrives, the trauma room explodes like the opening volleys in a battle — doctors shout orders, nurses scurry to assault with IV's and drugs, and Foley catheters invade the bladder. I may make a phone call here and there to summon the support troops, lab and respiratory, but the bulk of my job occurs after the protocol, when I attack the debris left littering the battlefield, wading through pools of blood and reassigning stained sheets to the laundry bag and mountains of paper, used bandages, and opened suture trays to the garbage.

A couple of weeks ago, we received word that Medstar was about to present us with one of these lovely protocols, and elderly lady bleeding from every possible orifice. I was busy administering an enema in another area of the E.R., so I missed being a participant in the opening wave of this lady's battle. When I entered the trauma room, she was lying naked on blood-soaked sheets in Trendelenburg's position (stretcher tilted so that her head was way below her feet) while medical personnel darted and buzzed above her like fighter jets, performing every life-saving procedure possible. I wondered how her ancient body could withstand such an attack, much less the ailment which originally brought her to us. Her skin was so fragile that she bled wherever anyone had touched her just a little too forcefully. She would be black and blue tomorrow, I decided — if she made it. What really caught my attention, though, was the fact that she seemed very aware of everything that was happening to her — she was neither senile nor so dopey from loss of blood that the experience could be a merciful blur to her. She was awake, terrified, and calling on Jesus to help her. Still her voice was quiet and maintained.

I stepped out for a moment to go get a wheelchair for a patient stuck on the outside deck of the E.R. He was a middle-aged man who was perfectly able to get from his car to the wheelchair but mysteriously unable to walk ten feet to the triage nurse. Once there, he refused to wait in line; he kept insisting that he was short of breath and had to see a doctor right away. I found it remarkable that he had enough breath to talk but not enough to breathe. He was also unable to comprehend that there were other battles more urgent than his alleged fight for air. I shoved him back into his place in line and told him that he had to see the triage nurse before he could see a doctor; everybody does (except protocols) and the sooner he settled down, the sooner he could be seen. I felt like giving his wheelchair a firm kick in the direction of the deck and watching him catapult into the parking lot.

On my way back to the trauma room, I contrasted the man I had just seen and my patient who, although lying under the warming lights, was nevertheless growing colder and colder. Comparing their reactions to illness, I began to devise other strategies to get rid of that jerk out there wasting perfectly good oxygen on his worthless, no-good body. Recalling the oxygen mask on my patient's face, I asked the nurse how she was doing. Before re-entering the trauma room, she just shook her head and said, "The worst part is that she knows she's dying."

I followed her. The intensity of the battle had diminished, but when I applied the bio-psycho-social approach to patient care that I had learned in

nursing school, I realized that on the psycho-social battle front, there were no troops. The doctors and nurses were so busy on the biological front that none of them had stopped to give her any more than token reassurance. No one was holding her hand or talking to her. For a minute I was tempted to hang back and act like one of the cool professionals. After all, this would be highly irregular — to break rank as if I knew what I was doing, and act independently. I would be out on a limb. I vacillated, leaning against the smooth, cold security of the medicine counter, now littered with empty bottles and bloody gauze sponges. Finally I gave in — thinking of how I would feel if I were her age and dying, I worked up the courage to go stand by her.

Her eyes sought mine. "Help me!"

I stroked her face and said, "They're working on you right now. We're taking care of you. Try to relax if you can. I know you must be hurting bad."

I thought I sounded pretty stupid but her expression seemed to change slightly. She said, "Don't leave me."

I assured her that I would not, and so it continued — she pleading and me reassuring — until she could no longer ask for help because she had vomited what looked like all the remaining blood in her body, and being in Trendelenburg's position, she was unable to get it out of her mouth and clean her airway. Now this was something way out of my league, and by then I was the only other person in the room. Terror infused me as I turned her head to the side and instinctively jammed the Younkers suction handle into her mouth. What if she suffocated and it was my fault? Blood rattled the suction tube on its way to the vacuum container as an eternity passed before she could speak again. Then it was the same old thing: "Don't leave me," and I did not.

I stayed late that night, accompanying Miss Maude to Med-Surg Trauma, a section of the ICU. I had promised her that I would not leave her, and I aimed to keep my word, so I stayed until she started to nod off. I touched her shoulder and said, "Miss Maude, you're starting to fall asleep. Do you mind if I go now?"

At first she said what she had been saying all evening long. Then she looked at me one last time and said, "You're so young — you probably have children waiting for you. Go on home and get some rest."

That is my final memory of her, for the next time I was working, I heard that she died later that night, as we knew she would. Upon reflecting on her and my short but intense interaction with her I was rather surprised to find that I felt not grief but a sense of peace and satisfaction. I did not know her well enough to miss her, but she had played a very important part in my life — by allowing me to be with her during her death, she had provided me with the opportunity to pass one of my ultimate tests.











